National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

NL-339 (r. 88/04) c

Canada

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CULTURAL, NARRATIVE, AND LANGUAGE CONTENT OF SELECTED FOLKTALES TOLD IN BURMA, CANADA, AND YORUBALAND

BY

ELIZABETH F. HILL ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN
INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING 1990

National Library of Canada
Canadian Theses Service
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Service des thèses canadiennes

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

ISBN 0-315-60205-8

NL-339 (r. 88/04) c

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: ELIZABETH F. HILL

TITLE OF THESIS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CULTURAL, NARRATIVE, AND LANGUAGE CONTENT OF SELECTED FOLKTALES TOLD IN BURMA, CANADA, AND YORUBALAND

DEGREE: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1990

PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY TO REPRODUCE SINGLE COPIES OF THIS THESIS AND TO LEND OR SELL SUCH COPIES FOR PRIVATE, SCHOLARLY OR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.

THE AUTHOR RESERVES OTHER PUBLICATION RIGHTS, AND NEITHER THE THESIS NOR EXTENSIVE EXTRACTS FROM IT MAY BE PRINTED OR OTHERWISE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE AUTHOR'S WRITTEN PERMISSION.

E. F. Hill

11724-42 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6J 0W7

Date: April 26, 1990

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CULTURAL, NARRATIVE, AND LANGUAGE CONTENT OF SELECTED FOLKTALES TOLD IN BURMA, CANADA, AND YORUBALAND submitted by ELIZABETH F. HILL in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Intercultural Education.

M. Assheton-Smith (Supervisor)

C. Urion

Regna Darnell
R. Darnell

Milan V. Dimic
M. Dimic

P. Rafferty

Kelleen Toohey
K. Toohey (External Examiner)

Date: April 12, 1990

ABSTRACT

This study presents a method of reading folktales to assist teachers of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) in assessing the tales' potential contribution with respect to the development of language skills and cross-cultural understanding. There are two objectives: to develop a methodology which elicits the messages and the means of their transmission in folktales, and to apply the methodology to a selected group of translated tales circulating in the Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba cultures to determine whether those tales reflect cultural diversity and present, simply and directly, universal concepts that transcend cultural differences.

The methodology identifies and compares the five surface elements in tales: character, plot, setting, narration, and language. Firstly, the physical and intellectual attributes, and the rewards and punishments of characters are studied to reveal the values and the views of the individual embedded in the tales. Secondly, the examination of plot focusses on how conflict is portrayed, managed, and resolved in the tales. Thirdly, to study setting, information regarding the fictitious societies, their institutions, and their ecology is gleaned by examining in each tale the physical setting; political, judicial, and economic structures; status and mobility; religion and the supernatural; portrayals of the family, gender, age, and nature. Fourthly, the narrative techniques (the plot line, the narrator, textual redundancies) are studied to assess how coherence is achieved in the tales. Finally, the language of the tales (vocabulary level, imagery, verse, song, proverbs, formulas) is assessed with respect to readability.

Shared elements between the three groups of tales include clear, direct, and heavily redundant structures, the emphasis on similar moral values, and comparable views of the family and the inevitability of conflict and change. Minor differences are apparent in culture-specific characters, occupations, crops, customs; major differences in world view surface in the portrayals of gender, age, and nature.

Implications for ESL pedagogy are as follows: the methodology serves as an identification and selection device, but is less useful as a predictor of students' interpretations; the study of folktales must be supplemented with ethnographic resources; the folktales used in this study can be used to enhance language skills and cross-cultural understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation was facilitated by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and from the University of Alberta. In addition to these institutions, the author wishes to express her appreciation to the following individuals for their encouragement and support: Jeanne Henry, Linda Ogilvie, Wendy Caplan, Gulshan Merchant, Leela Kobbekaduwa, Eamonn Callan, Nick Kach, and Robin. The committee must also be acknowledged for its profound influence on the academic and personal life of the author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A. REVIEW OF THE PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS OF FOLKLORE 1

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 11

C. METHODOLOGY 12
  DEFINITIONS AND TALE CHOICE 14
  METHOD OF ANALYSIS 18

D. LIMITATIONS 24

CHAPTER II. CHARACTER

A. INTRODUCTION 26

B. PROTAGONISTS AND ANTAGONISTS 28

C. PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF PROTAGONISTS AND ANTAGONISTS 32

D. RETRIBUTION AND INTELLECTUAL ATTRIBUTES 40

E. INDIVIDUALITY 55

F. CONCLUSION 65

CHAPTER III. PLOT

A. INTRODUCTION 66

B. TYPE OF CONFLICT 67

C. RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT 79

D. MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT 83

E. OUTCOMES OF CONFLICT 88

F. CONCLUSION 93

CHAPTER IV. SETTING

A. INTRODUCTION 95

B. PHYSICAL SETTING........ 97
C. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS........ 97
D. ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS........ 102
E. STATUS AND MOBILITY........ 104
F. RELIGION AND THE SUPERNATURAL........ 108
G. THE FAMILY........ 111
H. FEMALES........ 117
I. THE AGED........ 122
J. NATURE........ 126
K. CONCLUSION........ 131

CHAPTER V. NARRATION

A. INTRODUCTION........ 133
B. THE PLOT LINE........ 134
C. THE NARRATOR........ 138
D. REDUNDANCY........ 150
E. CONCLUSION........ 170

CHAPTER VI. LANGUAGE

A. INTRODUCTION........ 172
B. THE FRY READABILITY SCALE........ 173
C. IMAGERY........ 175
  FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE........ 188
    METAPHOR........ 189
    PERSONIFICATION........ 194
    SIMILE........ 199
    IRONY........ 203
    FIGURES OF SOUND........ 209
D. OTHER STYLISTIC FEATURES........ 212
  OPENING AND CLOSING FORMULAS........ 214

E. LISTENING COMPREHENSION........ 216

F. CONCLUSION........ 218

CHAPTER VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS........ 221

BIBLIOGRAPHY........ 233
PRIMARY SOURCES........ 233
SECONDARY SOURCES........ 234

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. PROTAGONISTS 29

TABLE 2. ANTAGONISTS 30

TABLE 3. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF HEROES 36

TABLE 4. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF ANTI-HEROES 38

TABLE 5. TALES IN WHICH PROTAGONISTS RECEIVE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS 41

TABLE 6. TALES IN WHICH ANTAGONISTS RECEIVE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS 41

TABLE 7. TALE TYPE BASED ON TYPE OF PROTAGONIST 63

TABLE 8. TYPE OF CONFLICT 69

TABLE 9. BASIC PROCESS IN RESOLVING CONFLICT 80

TABLE 10. MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT 84

TABLE 11. TALES IN WHICH REVERSALS OCCUR 90

TABLE 12. PORTRAYALS OF ROYALTY 98

TABLE 13. STATUS OF PROTAGONISTS 105

TABLE 14. PORTRAYALS OF FAMILY 114

TABLE 15. PORTRAYALS OF FEMALES 118

TABLE 16. PORTRAYALS OF THE AGED 123

TABLE 17. PORTRAYALS OF NATURE 127

TABLE 18. LEVEL OF TALE DIFFICULTY BASED ON THE FRY READABILITY SCALE 174

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The merits of exposing youth to folklore have been debated for centuries. Ranged on one side of the debate are pedagogues who deny the educational value of folklore, claiming that folkloric content is irrelevant, frightening, and immoral. Their responses to the publication of traditional folklore have included the revision of tales, the creation of modern (and thus more appropriate) stories, and calls for the censorship of folkloric materials which contain racist or sexist elements. Ranged on the other side of the debate are the proponents who extoll the benefits of folklore, arguing from psychoanalytic, anthropological, and educational perspectives that its content is imaginative, relevant, morally appropriate, and readable. These proponents of folklore stress that early exposure to fairy tales enhances healthy personal development, and they advocate the use of folklore to reduce ethnocentrism and develop cross-cultural understanding between students from diverse cultures. They also describe how folklore can function as an instructional tool in the development of such cognitive skills as reading, writing, and analytical thinking.

Notwithstanding the vigorous arguments for suppressing folklore, the current study proceeds from the premise that students should be exposed to such material. The following discussion elucidates the purpose for the current study by briefly describing the psychological, anthropological, and educational arguments for the dissemination of folklore.

The psychoanalytic school of folklore asserts that educators are responsible to sustain the personal development of students by exposing those students to folk literature. Bruno Bettelheim argues that fairy tales present existential dilemmas and function "not only to make us acquainted with the fact that life is difficult and entails often dangerous struggles, but also that only through the mastery of succeeding crises in our existence can we eventually find our true self" (1985:9). For example, such fairy tales as *Hansel and Gretel* portray positively the necessary, difficult, and rewarding process of maturation which replaces childish dependence on adults with mature independence and self-reliance (1985:7). Thus, in Bettelheim's view, fairy tales provide readers with the opportunity to confront vicariously and victoriously their deepest fears and desires--an experience which contributes to the self-knowledge and self-confidence which are requisite to an individual's self-esteem and self-fulfillment.

Similarly, Weiser et al. (1981) argue that because of their didactic nature fairy tales can positively influence individual development. These researchers reviewed the fairy tales recommended for use in Ontario schools for evidence of lessons about character development. They found that such positive qualities as confidence, compassion, empathy, independence, pride, and humility are stressed in the stories. They conclude that the fairy tale emphasizes moral points and that by enabling children to view commonly experienced conflicts from a different perspective, fairy tales may encourage children to choose appropriate ways of dealing with these conflicts.

However, psychoanalysts differ in terms of what they feel these conflicts are. For most orthodox Freudians, the tales portray symbolic reenactments and resolutions of the reader's own Oedipus complex; these scholars' interpretations focus on sexual imagery and symbolism. For Bruno Bettelheim, the Grimm version of *Little Red Riding Hood* [*Little Red Cap*]

> in symbolic form projects the girl into the dangers of her oedipal conflicts during puberty, and then saves her from them, so that she will be able to mature conflict-free. The maternal figures of mother and witch which were all-important in 'Hansel and Gretel' have shrunk to insignificance in 'Little Red Cap,' where neither mother nor grandmother can do anything--neither threaten nor protect. The male, by contrast, is all-important, split into two opposite forms: the dangerous seducer who, if given in to, turns into the destroyer of the good grandmother and the girl; and the hunter, the responsible, strong, and rescuing father figure. It is as if Little Red Cap is trying to understand the contradictory nature of the male by experiencing all aspects of his personality: the selfish, asocial, violent, potentially destructive tendencies of the id (the wolf); the unselfish, social, thoughtful, and protective propensities of the ego (the hunter) (1976:172).

The Jungians, on the other hand, tend to view the text in wider terms than the Freudians. They analyze texts in terms of unconscious archetypes which are not necessarily sexual. Nicholas Tucker explains the Jungian approach to the meaning of *The Frog Prince*:

> The frog here represents not simply sex but the whole 'unconscious deep' of any individual, filled with hidden treasures but like serpents, dragons or other traditional animal frighteners, loathsome in its initial appearance. But if the heroine can accept these riches, and break through the taboos and fears that sometimes stop us from embracing unconscious fantasies, hitherto inaccessible because they deal with various 'forbidden' topics and feelings, then she may end by realising the richness of her total personality. With soul no longer split off from body, there will be no further need to continue living only at half strength (1981:87-88).

For many Jungians, the study of folktales stimulates elements of the human collective unconscious, thus aiding the reader's personal process of individuation while simultaneously binding more closely together the whole human race. Such educators as Ivy Chan argue that the universal appeal of tales is based on this reflection of our collective human experience. Folktales, then, can be used to motivate students and to foster ties between diverse cultural groups (1984:23-24).

This anthropological view is supported by such scholars as Alan Dundes and Genelle Grant Morain. Dundes argues that folktales portray cultures accurately, imaginatively, and simply, and thus can replace stereotypical notions with more realistic and positive insights into given cultures. He asserts that folklore, because it originates within a society, necessarily reflects the views and values of that culture and hence provides a more reliable picture of that society than descriptions originating among outsiders (1969:471). Dundes also points out that folklore which is directed against groups can contribute to self-understanding because it both reveals cultural expectations and prejudices, and it provides evidence to a given group of how it is viewed by others. Thus, the study of folklore creates opportunities for students to share different cultural perspectives, examine prejudices, and adopt more tolerant attitudes towards others.

Some practical suggestions for integrating folktales with cultural exploration are delineated by such educators as Genelle Grant Morain and Chantima Bunvanich. In her doctoral dissertation, Morain examines the role French folk literature can play in introducing French language students to French culture. Contending that the foreign language teacher has a responsibility to teach cultural understanding as well as language skills, Morain devises three teaching units designed to illustrate French individualism, family relationships, and relationships with their native land. Morain's first unit attempts to underline cultural differences between France and Germany by comparing the Perrault and Grimm versions of *Cinderella*.

The second unit emphasizes various aspects of French individualism as mirrored in modern literature, folktales, and other traditions. The final unit is devoted to the study of French proverbs, which provide some penetrating insights into French character. Similarly, Bunvanich (1976) recommends that Thai folktales be used with elementary school children to teach Thai heritage and moral values.

However, both Morain and Bunvanich caution that folklore should not always be taken literally. For instance, the blason, which is usually derogatory in nature, should not be presented as a vignette of a given group, but instead should be used to stimulate interesting discussions on the nature of stereotypes and prejudices. The use of folklore to combat discriminatory attitudes is also promoted by Nora Belle Mahoney, who reasons that "the study of the universal nature of folktale themes in the classroom is an effective medium for making students aware of the contributions of cultures other than the Greek toward the construction of a spiritual history of man" (1972:11).

That folklore is useful in clarifying man's history and culture is also the stance taken by such Marxist writers as Maxim Gorky. Gorky argues for the inclusion of folklore in the re-education of Marxist students because "the true history of the toiling people cannot be learnt without a knowledge of . . . folklore" (n.d.:243). Gorky sees signs of a materialist mode of thought in ancient man in tales "which carry memories of the work of taming wild animals, discovering herbs and inventing tools" (n.d.:229). These tales, then, document the struggle of the toiling masses and justify the elevation of the working class:

> I have no doubt that you know these ancient tales, myths and legends, but I should like their fundamental meaning to be more profoundly understood. I have in view the striving of working men of ancient times to ease their labour, raise productivity, arm themselves against enemies, both quadruped and biped, and also to exert an influence on the hostile natural elements. . . . Hercules, the 'hero of labour,' and 'master of all skills,' was eventually elevated to Olympus to sit among the gods. In the imagination of primitive men, a god was not an abstract conception or a fantastic being, but a perfectly real figure equipped with some implement of labour, skilled in one trade or another, and man's instructor and fellow-worker. A god was an artistic embodiment of successes in labour (n.d.:230-231).

For Gorky, then, the study of folktales can perform a very utilitarian function in explaining and justifying Marxist tenets to youth, and therefore should be included in a curriculum designed for a new social order.

Finally, aside from the psychological and cultural arguments for using folklore in the classroom, educators recommend the use of folklore in developing such cognitive skills as language proficiency and abstract reasoning ability. In her doctoral dissertation, Sunantha Munsegvith recommends that Thai folktales be incorporated into a supplemental reading program for primary school students in Thailand. She describes how a particular Thai tale, *The adventures of King Suton*, can be rewritten for each of grades one to three and used to enhance both the listening and the reading skills of students, as well as their understanding of grammatical structures. Suggested activities include listening drills, the identification of parts of speech, and the critical examination and evaluation of issues presented in the tale.

Munsegvith's proposed program involves the repeated use of a single folktale in a variety of language-related activities. This idea is also iterated by Virginia French Allen, who claims that if a child listens to a tale several times, his speech fluency and reading speed and comprehension will improve

(1977:6). To illustrate the various ways in which a single item can be used to enhance language proficiency, Allen suggests twelve uses for *The fox and the grapes*--including cloze exercises (students must use the context to supply the missing words in a reading passage throughout which words have been deleted at regular or irregular intervals), scrambled sentences, controlled composition (pupils must copy a story with a single prescribed change--for example, from singular to plural), sentence combining, changing to indirect speech.

Apart from its role in language acquisition and development, proponents of folklore assert that folk literature has a place of importance in the literature classroom, both as a genre in its own right and as a necessary basis for studying other forms of literature. As Evelyn Gregory (1984) and Cora Lee Nollendorfs (1983) point out, many of the metaphors pervading contemporary society derive from folktales. Folktales, they argue, provide the basis for our literary tradition. Furthermore, as Alan Dundes observes, folklore provides a multitude of examples for teachers to explain the stylistic differences between the oral and written traditions (1969:475). An understanding of such differences frequently improves the quality of student writing.

Joy Moss concurs that knowledge of these traditions is important. In order to instill in her eight and nine year old students some awareness of the oral tradition, Moss introduced, in sequence, the Indian Jataka tales, Aesop's fables, and the fables of La Fontaine (which borrowed heavily from Aesop and the Jatakas). Moss describes how the study of fables resulted in a clear understanding of that genre. Moreover, the study of fables improved the students' ability to reason, evidenced by the fact that the students began to apply abstract concepts introduced in fables to such other genres as the proverb and the myth. Hence, for example, students educed the meaning of "pride goeth before a fall" by using the analogy of Aesop's fable "The milkmaid and her pail". This stimulated the further observation that the proverb applies equally well to the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus (1980:23-24). Finally, William R. Bascom discusses a further pedagogical application of folklore to be that of "forcing conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior . . . through the cleverly timed proverb, riddle, or anecdote".[1]

Thus, this review of the pedagogical applications of folklore reveals that the arguments supporting its use are wideranging. Some educators (Bettelheim and Chan) advance that folklore has beneficial psychological effects; others (Munsegvith, Allen, Gregory, Nollendorfs, Dundes, Moss, and Bascom) discuss various ways in which folklore can be used to develop language proficiency and abstract reasoning ability as well as to influence the behaviour of students. Perhaps most significant from the perspective of English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) and intercultural education is the fact that scholars advocate the use of folklore to develop language skills and, as well, to promote cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. Allen shows how folklore can be applied to the study of language in uni-lingual contexts and Morain indicates that folklore is also useful in second language learning situations. Morain's dissertation, which focusses on the use of folklore in the teaching of French-as-a-Second Language, is directly applicable to the field of

---

[1] William R. Bascom, "Four functions of folklore," in *The study of folklore*, ed. by Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 279-298, quoted in Genelle Grant Morain, "Some implications of French folk literature for the secondary language curriculum," 153.

ESL because it is a well-recognized fact among ESL practitioners and theoreticians that the teaching of culture is central to the teaching of language.[1] Because the ESL classroom is frequently characterized not only by linguistic diversity, but by cultural diversity as well, the study of culture is significantly intertwined with the study of language. Morain's work, which illustrates how folklore makes explicit many aspects of culture, provides ESL teachers with the incentive to use folklore as a language and as a cultural resource.

Moreover, for Morain and such other scholars as Dundes and Bunvanich, the undeniable presence of racist and sexist elements in folkloric materials stimulates the critical examination of the values, prejudices, and world views of the cultures generating the material. This, they feel, will enhance cultural awareness and reveal the need for tolerance. Furthermore, Chan argues that folklore reflects universal aspects of human existence, and thus underlines similarities between diverse cultures. For these scholars, the dissemination of folklore is desirable because the material increases cultural awareness and, when properly presented, leads to cross-cultural understanding.

Because intercultural education is based on, and promotes, the concepts of cross-cultural awareness and understanding, it is imperative that, prior to its introduction in educational (and indeed in any) settings, the cultural content of international folklore be assessed. Educators must be able to ascertain whether the materials they intend to use do contain elements that might have deleterious or, conversely, beneficial effects on cross-cultural understanding. Thus, educators must be able to identify the messages in the materials they intend to use. Furthermore, educators must also be able to determine how clearly and directly those messages are transmitted in the material, and to whom the material is best directed. This necessarily means that the content, structure, and language of folkloric materials be examined before that folklore is applied in intercultural settings.

---

[1] Mary McGroarty and José L. Galvan, "Culture as an issue in second language teaching," in *Beyond basics: issues and research in TESOL*, ed. by Marianne Celce-Murcia (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985), 82.

It is clear from the preceding review of the applications of folklore that there are numerous ways to analyze folkloric content. The concurrent existence of a variety of approaches to the study of folkloric content reflects the fact that these materials are both multi-functional and multi-layered. Scholars representing Freudian, Jungian, and Marxist schools of thought have developed very effective ways of identifying in tales sexual imagery and symbolism, unconscious archetypes, and materialist modes of thought. However, none of these types of analysis are primarily concerned with the use of tales in intercultural education, and hence those methods of reading are not designed to address the issues concerning the ESL teacher--the transmission of cultural values and language skills.

In a similar way, structuralist analyses developed by Vladimir Propp and Claude Lévi-Strauss are designed primarily for folklorists and anthropologists rather than for educators. Propp sets before himself the task of correctly describing the fairy tale and hence he emphasizes form rather than content. Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myth, which ultimately attempts to identify the form of human thought, focusses mainly on binary oppositions and largely ignores the manifest messages in myth. Neither scholar deals with language elements. Therefore, like the psychoanalytic and Marxist analyses of content, the structural analyses of Propp and Lévi-Strauss are of limited usefulness to the ESL educator who is primarily concerned with the transmission of cultural values and the development of language competency.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research is concerned with the use of folktales in intercultural education and stems directly from the researcher's experiences teaching English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) in Nigeria. During her tenure as an ESL teacher, the researcher found international folktales to be an effective medium in language instruction. Subsequent discussions with colleagues revealed that the use of folktales in intercultural education, and specifically in the teaching of ESL, is widespread. There are, however, potential problems associated with using folklore in intercultural education. On the one hand, because folklore does frequently contain controversial attitudes towards specific groups (such as women and minorities), folklore may in fact hinder the development of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. On the other hand, because folklore contains evidence of its source culture's views, values, and practices, it may increase cultural awareness, reveal the need for tolerance, and hence enhance cross-cultural understanding.

Because both arguments have some validity, it is necessary to carefully assess stories before using them in teaching, either cross-culturally, as in ESL, or in introducing cross-cultural awareness in a specific culture. Such a method of reading must account for both cultural and structural content. It must elucidate the messages and the means of their transmission in folktales. Because this method must take into account not only the tales' manifest messages, but the language and narrational structures as well, the structural methods of tale analysis developed in folklore studies by Vladimir Propp and in anthropology by Claude Lévi-Strauss are of limited usefulness. Thus, the current study has two main objectives: to develop for teachers of ESL a method of reading which, by focussing on the manifest cultural, narrative, and language elements in folktales, will facilitate the assessment of the tales' potential use in ESL classes for developing language skills and enhancing cross-cultural tolerance and understanding; and to ascertain whether the translated tales from three diverse cultures reflect such a cultural diversity while simultaneously presenting in a simple and direct way universal concepts that transcend the cultural differences.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study involves three basic procedures: the choice of the cultures generating the tales to be analyzed, the selection of the tales themselves, and the analysis of those tales. Because this study is necessarily concerned with cultural diversity in tales, it is imperative to establish a corpus of tales in which cultural diversity could reasonably be expected to exist. Following such scholars as Alan Dundes, this study accepts the premise that folktales do, to some extent, mirror the views and values of their source cultures. Theoretically, if such a correlation exists, then similar cultures could be expected to produce tales projecting similar views and values. Conversely, if cultures differ, one might also expect their diversity to be reflected in their folktales. Thus, to fulfil the need to establish a corpus of tales in which cultural diversity is possible, three diverse source cultures have been chosen: the Burmese, the Canadian, and the Yoruba. This choice was based on the following considerations: the cultures differ from one another in significant ways; their folktales are available in printed format; the writer has personal familiarity with these cultures.

The Burmese are the politically dominant ethnic group in Burma, inhabiting the valleys of the Irrawaddy, Sittang, and Chindwin rivers, the Arakan Coast, and the Tenasserim panhandle.[1] The Yoruba, a West African tribal group, are dominant in southwestern Nigeria with scattered groups also found in Benin and northern Togo.[2] Canadians derive from diverse national and cultural groups, but the dominant Canadian culture is of Western European origin. These three cultures differ with respect to language, religion, family structures, political and economic organization, conflict management and legal traditions, and attitudes towards other cultures, and hence their inclusion in this study satisfies the requirement for diversity among the tales' source cultures. Following the decision to use Burmese, Canadian, and Yoruba folktales, it was necessary to choose for analysis a representative sample of the tales from each culture. The following section details this procedure.

---

[1] Pyotr Nikolayevich Kropotkin et al., "Asia," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., c1985, 14:201.

[2] "Yoruba." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 1976, X:829.

DEFINITIONS AND TALE CHOICE

For the purposes of this study the term "folktale" is used interchangeably with the term "tale" and refers to a "prose story, traditional in content, transmitted orally through many generations".[1] Following the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and Stith Thompson's *Motif index of folk literature,* the folktale is understood to emphasize fictionality and is thus considered to be distinct from legend or tradition (which are usually believed[2]) and myth (which has an absolute authority that is implied rather than stated, and which, as a religious phenomenon, cannot be fully, or at all, explained in terms of nonreligious categories[3]). Folktales are also considered to be distinct from such other types of folk literature as fables, ballads, some medieval romances.

Fourteen translated folktales (five Burmese, five Euro-Canadian, and four Yoruba) have been chosen for study. These tales represent the various tale categories identified in published collections of each culture's tales. To select the Burmese and Yoruba tales, the researcher first consulted Margaret Read MacDonald's *The storyteller's sourcebook: a subject, title and motif index to folklore collections for children,* the current issue of *Books in print,* and the University of Alberta library catalogue. The researcher then examined all available English-language editions of Burmese and Yoruba folktales and categorized the tales in the works. Then one tale typifying each identified category was selected. The same resource guides, supplemented by *A*

---

[1] "Folktale." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., 1976, IV:212.

[2] Stith Thompson, "Folk literature," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., 1976, 7:458.

[3] Kees W. Bolle, "Myth and mythology," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., 1976, 12:794.

bibliography of Canadian folklore in English by Edith Fowke and Carole Henderson Carpenter, and three additional works by Fowke (*Tales told in Canada, Explorations in Canadian folklore, The folklore of Canada*) were used to identify English-language collections of Canadian folktales. Because Canadian culture is so diverse, resulting in an infinite number and variety of tales from a wide range of ethnic groups, the researcher, after considering the availability of ethnic tales, has restricted the choice of Canadian tales to those collected by the Grimm brothers. These tales are readily available in written format throughout Canada and are known to circulate orally throughout the culture. This decision was also dictated by a departmental requirement that the researcher compare foreign tales with tales deriving from her own literary heritage. To reflect the fact that these tales are of Western European origin, the term "Euro-Canadian" will be used throughout this thesis to refer to them. In addition, phrases such as "Canada's tales" or "tales from Canada" should be understood to mean Euro-Canadian tales circulating widely throughout Canada. As with the Burmese and Yoruba tales, the selected Euro-Canadian tales represent the categories identified in the collections of Grimm tales.

All of the selected tales have been culled from English-language collections. Because this study is concerned with the possible benefits of using folktales in ESL settings, it is important to examine the tales likely to be used in those ESL settings. Because the ESL teacher is engaged in English language instruction, he or she will use English-language versions of folktales. The researcher has, however, made every effort to find reliable translations. The Burmese folktales have all been collected by an eminent Burmese folklorist at the University of Rangoon--Maung Htin Aung. All of the Euro-Canadian tales come from Padraic Colum's authoritative collection of Grimm tales.[1] Most of the Yoruba tales derive from a collection by a Yoruba folklorist, Abayomi Fuja. The one exception comes from a collection collaborated upon by Harold Courlander and Ezekiel A. Eshugbayi, a Yoruba.

The following categories and their representative tale samples have been selected for this study:

a) etiological (tales which explain the origin or generation of a phenomenon)

Burmese--Why the vulture is bald
Euro-Canadian--The sole
Yoruba--Taking a sacrifice to heaven

b) combined proverbial and trickster tales (tales which simultaneously illustrate certain proverbs by explaining the circumstances, usually a clever trick, giving rise to the proverb)

Burmese--The rabbit has a cold
Yoruba--Ijapa and the hot water test

c) trickster (tales illustrating cleverness with a trick)

Euro-Canadian--The wolf and the fox

d) supernatural (tales containing some element of magic, the supernatural, or a marvellous adventure)

Burmese--The drunkard and the opium-eater
Euro-Canadian--Little Briar-rose
Yoruba--Oni and the great bird

e) cumulative (formula tales characterized by the accumulation and repetition of detail)

Burmese--The crow and the wren
Euro-Canadian--The louse and the flea
Yoruba--Fourteen hundred cowries

---

[1] There is no complete Canadian edition of the Grimm tales. However, Colum's edition is used by Canadians.

f) law (tales which illustrate a point of law or describe a clever decision by a judge and which had some official authority because they could be cited by a disputant or his advocate before a court of law[1])

Burmese--The seven mendicants

g) wisdom (tales which illustrate wisdom while being distinct from law and trickster tales)

Euro-Canadian--The peasant's wise daughter

Complete references for these tales are found in the bibliography of primary sources.

These categories are somewhat arbitrary, but are derived from the corpus of available tales.[2] Some categories are not represented by tales from all three cultures. The Burmese and Yoruba proverbial and trickster tales have been combined into one category because most of the available proverbial tales included a trick. No examples of Euro-Canadian proverbial tales were identified and hence the chosen tale represents only the trickster category. Moreover, the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba collections do not contain law tales and hence that category applies only to Burmese tales. Similarly, no corresponding Burmese and Yoruba wisdom tales were identified and thus that category is represented by a single Euro-Canadian tale.

---

[1] Maung Htin Aung, *Burmese folk-tales*, xiv.

[2] These categorizations reflect the useful, but unsystematic, nature of folkloric classification schemes. In *Folk tales of Burma* Maung Htin Aung divides Burmese tales into six categories: animal tales, wonder tales, proverbial tales, humorous tales, ghost tales, law tales (1976:5). These categories, like the categories of Wundt, Volkóv, and Aarne which Propp discusses in *Morphology of the folktale* (1968:5-10), contain much overlap and exhibit inconsistency in the basic principle of division. Nevertheless, as Propp remarks, such classification schemes are "basically correct" (1968:6). The categories used in the current study represent a relatively broad, if not necessarily exhaustive, sample of the Burmese, Grimm, and Yoruba tales.

Every attempt was made to be as consistent as possible in choosing the individual tales. For example, of the 66 law tales examined, the vast majority (57) featured Princess Learned-in-the-Law, 48 dealt with points of law and the majority of that 48 dealt with liabilities of some sort. The chosen tale features Princess Learned-in-the-Law and illustrates that in the eyes of the law a bailee was liable to return property only if all the conditions of bailment had been fulfilled. In a similar way, most of the Burmese trickster tales featured the rabbit as trickster, the Yoruba tales favoured the tortoise, and the Euro-Canadian tales centred around the fox. The selected tales are, correspondingly, rabbit, tortoise, and fox tales. Finally, most etiological tales explained characteristics of animals and this is reflected in the choice of tales for that category.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The third stage of the methodology, which immediately follows the selection of tales, is the analysis. This method of analysis revolves around the study of the following surface features in the tales: character, plot, setting, narration, and language. Four of these elements--character, plot, setting, language--provide cultural information. The analysis of this information proceeds from Edward B. Tylor's definition of culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".[1] The cultural information sought through the study of tale elements is loosely based on the Emergent Model of a culture developed by Howard L. Nostrand and F. Nostrand. This model consists of the following categories and sub-categories[1]:

---

[1] Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), v.1, *The origins of culture*, 1.

I. The culture
  A. Main themes
  B. Ethos or national character
  C. Assumptions about reality
  D. Verifiable knowledge
  E. Art forms
  F. Language
  G. Paralanguage and kinesics

II. The society and its institutions
  A. Family
  B. Religious
  C. Economic-occupational
  D. Political and judicial
  E. Educational
  F. Intellectual-aesthetic
  G. Recreational
  H. Communication
  I. Stratification and mobility
  J. Social proprieties
  K. Status of groupings by age and sex
  L. Status of ethnic and religious minorities
  M. Interpersonal and intergroup conflicts

III. Conflicts
  A. Conflict and conflict resolution
  B. Defense and adjustment mechanisms

IV. The ecology
  A. Attitudes toward nature
  B. Exploitation of nature
  C. Use of natural products
  D. Technology
  E. Settlement and territorial organization
  F. Transportation and travel

V. The individual

VI. The cross-cultural environment
  A. Attitudes toward other cultures

---

[1] Based on Howard L. Nostrand and F. Nostrand, "Culture-wide values and assumptions as essential content for Levels I to III." In *French language education: the teaching of culture in the classroom*, ed. by Charles Jay and P. Castle. Springfield, Ill.: Illinois Title III, NDEA, 1971; cited in revised form in H. Ned Seelye, *Teaching culture: strategies for intercultural communication* (Lincolnwood, Ill.: National Textbook, c1984), 41-42; quoted in Alice C. Omaggio, *Teaching language in context: proficiency-oriented instruction*, 366-367.

B. Attitudes toward international and supranational organizations In addition to the cultural information gleaned from the study of character, plot, setting, and language, structural information is also obtained through the study of language and narration. These two elements, narration and language, are analyzed from the perspectives of coherence and readability.

This method of analysis deals successively with each surface element. Thus, beginning with the first element--character--the researcher examined the tales for evidence of cultural diversity or similarity with respect to the values and views of the individual presented in the tales. Firstly, the term "character" was defined using the standard literary definition supplied by M.H. Abrams in *A glossary of literary terms*. Next, folkloric definitions of that term were considered. These folkloric definitions were culled from Max Lüthi's traditional study, *The European folktale: form and nature*, and from the structuralist perspective of Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the folktale*. These definitions were then applied to the tales, facilitating the identification of the tales' characters, and, more specifically, the protagonists, antagonists, heroes, and anti-heroes. Each character's physical attributes (name, age, gender, physical features) and intellectual abilities (intelligence, virtue, individuality, self-motivation, dependence on others) were noted. This information was gleaned from the descriptions of characters and from their actions in the tales. Lastly, the researcher considered retribution in the tales (who is rewarded or punished, how, why). The compilation of these details then allowed the researcher to make cross-cultural comparisons of the values and the views of the individual embedded in the tales.

Following the analysis of character, the researcher examined the second surface element--plot--with the aim of revealing the similarities and differences in the tales' perceptions of conflict. The researcher first considered the definitions of plot put forth by Abrams, Lüthi, and Propp, as well as the definition of conflict in the *Encyclopedia of anthropology*. The researcher then examined how conflict is portrayed in the tales by determining the prevalent types of conflict (personal, societal, environmental), particularly that characterizing the major task of the protagonist. The management and resolution of conflict were also studied by ascertaining whether solutions are dominated by violence or non-violence; dyadic or tryadic processes. Lastly, the outcomes of conflict (reversals of fortune, resulting themes) were elicited and compared cross-culturally.

Subsequent to the study of plot, the researcher analyzed the third surface element--setting. Once again, the researcher sought to specify the cultural content in the tales, this time garnering information on the fictitious societies, their institutions, and their ecology. This was done by examining the concept of setting from the literary perspective (Abrams), as well as from the folkloric perspectives of Lüthi and Propp. Then the researcher identified in the tales the physical settings (place, time); political institutions (types (for example, monarchies), their functions, relative prominence and importance, relationships to individuals, positive and negative qualities (as revealed in dialogue, actions, and descriptions)); economic structures (currency, occupations, ownership of property, transfer of wealth); status and mobility (kinds of hierarchies, insiders and outsiders, changes in status (who achieves it and how)); religion and the supernatural (prominence and importance, overt and covert elements); the family (type (nuclear, extended), relationships between members (equality as revealed through dialogue and tasks), positive and negative aspects); females (functions, occupations, status, interaction with other characters, positive and negative qualities); and, using the same categories as for the study of females, the aged and nature. Once identified, these elements were then compared cross-culturally.

The study of the first three surface elements--character, plot, setting--thus focusses primarily on the cultural content of the folktales. The fourth element dealt with in the analysis--narration--deals with tale structure because it studies narrative techniques in order to assess how coherence is achieved in the tales from three diverse cultures. To do this, the concept of coherence was introduced by considering the definition of that term given by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon in *A handbook to literature* and by referring to Susan Rubin Suleiman's discussion of coherence in literary works. M.H. Abrams's *A glossary of literary terms* provided definitions of various features of narration (including point of view and narrator), and Lüthi and Propp provided analyses of narrative techniques in folktales. These sources enabled the researcher to establish that the plot line, the narrator, and textual redundancies compose the foundation upon which tale coherence rests. The researcher then studied in each tale the plot line (amount of description, extraneous elements, sequencing and proportion of episodes, presence of backgrounded events and flashbacks); the narrator (qualities (omniscient, intrusive, reliable), role, authority, types of intrusions (evaluations, explanations, comments, definitions)); redundancy with respect to character (personal traits reflected in actions, dialogue, setting; complementarity between an individual's mental and physical attributes); redundancy with respect to plot (events occur or are described more than once, foreshadowing, prediction, morals, summaries, proverbs, verbatim repetition). The identification and comparison of these features constitutes the basis for appraising how coherently the messages in the Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales are transmitted.

Finally, the last surface element to be examined using this method is language. The study of the language in the folktales elicits both cultural and structural information. The study of the vocabulary (both its level of difficulty and the figures of speech) is related to tale transmission because it determines the general readability level of the tales. This information is requisite to the determination of suitable audiences for these tales. In addition, the study of the imagery provides cultural insights relating to the tales' dominant world view and the range and appeal of the objects in the tales. To study the language of the tales, the researcher first defined readability using *A dictionary of reading and related terms*, edited by Theodore L. Harris and Richard E. Hodges, and then applied the Fry readability scale to each of the tales. After ascertaining, through word and syllable counts, the general reading level of the tales, the researcher then examined the concept of imagery from the literary perspective of Abrams and the folkloric perspective of Lüthi. These definitions provided the incentive for studying three aspects of imagery: description, the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to, and figurative language. The researcher studied description and objects and qualities of sense perception simultaneously. This included the following concerns: amount of descriptive detail; orientation (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory); emphasis (age, size, beauty); range and function of objects. Next, using Abrams's definitions of figurative language, the researcher located and examined in the tales figures of thought (metaphor, personification, simile); figures of speech (rhetorical question, apostrophe, chiasmus, hyperbole, irony); figures of sound (alliteration, assonance, rhyme, onomatopoeia). Finally, an open-ended search for supplementary features uncovered the following structures: verse, song, proverbs, formulas. Their characteristics, functions, and effects on readability were considered and compared cross-culturally.

This method of analysis, which accounts for the basic observable surface structures in tales (character, plot, setting, narration, language), draws from the fields of anthropology, literature, and folklore, and elucidates the structural and cultural content in international tales. It focusses on the identification and comparison of cultural and structural details within tales. It also allows the cross-cultural comparison of findings, and thus can be used to reveal, in tales from diverse cultures, the similarities and differences in messages and in the transmission of those messages. Such a comparison aids the educator in identifying suitable audiences for the material and in assessing its potential for developing language skills and the ideals of intercultural education--tolerance and understanding.

LIMITATIONS

This thesis is limited to the study of fourteen folktales selected from published English-language collections of Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba folktales. Because this study generates theory by developing a method of reading folktales, a large sample size is not essential. Even when the method of analysis is applied to a limited corpus of tales, it still reveals the internal logic of the tales. Thus, the method can be adequately developed with, illustrated with, and applied to, a small number of examples. However, because the sample size is so small, the researcher does not claim that the conclusions drawn about the Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba folktales used in this study are valid for the entire corpus of folktales generated by those cultures. The validation of those observations would require a much larger sample size. Secondly, because the tales have been examined in translation, the method reveals only what is present in these particular translations of the tales, and not what has been eliminated or altered in the process of translation. Thus, in no way does the method elucidate the relationship between the translated versions and the original tales. The researcher therefore concedes that uncovered elements may not be inherent in the tales themselves, but may be the result of the process of translation. Moreover, the method of reading developed in this study is not designed to determine the relation between these folktales and their source cultures. The elicited elements should therefore be understood as features of the stories rather than of the source cultures. Finally, although this method of analysis is intended to benefit teachers of ESL, the method provides a general assessment only, and does not deal with the technical concerns of that discipline.

In summary, chapter one of this dissertation has presented a review of the pedagogical applications of folklore, articulated the purpose of the current study, described the methodology and its limitations. Chapters two to six of this dissertation will present the actual analysis, followed by a summary and concluding remarks in chapter seven.

CHAPTER TWO

CHARACTER

> **Characters** are the persons, in a dramatic or narrative work, endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say--the **dialogue**--and what they do--the **action**. The grounds in a character's temperament and moral nature for his speech and actions constitute his **motivation**. . . .
>
> E.M. Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), introduced popular new terms for an old distinction in discriminating between flat and round characters. A **flat character** (also called a 'type,' or 'two-dimensional'), Forster says, is built around a 'single idea or quality' and is presented in outline and without much individualizing detail, and so can be fairly adequately described in a single phrase or sentence. A **round character** is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; thus he is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and, like most people, he is capable of surprising us.[1]

Max Lüthi, in his influential work *The European folktale: form and nature*, more specifically defines folktale characters as "those figures who carry forward the plot (*Handlungsträger)*, without any suggestion that these figures have an actual character or inner life" (1982:15). Lüthi's view, which is shared by many other scholars of narrative, is that "the folktale shows us flat figures rather than human beings with active inner lives" (1982:14). Lüthi argues that these flat figures lack emotion: they experience no astonishment, doubt, or fear of the numinous, and lack a sense of the extraordinary (1982:6-7). Moreover, "[the folktale hero] is not a human being who seeks and anticipates, but a mere figure in the plot who neither sets his own goals nor attains them through his own efforts and accomplishments" (1982:58).

---

[1] M.H. Abrams, *A glossary of literary terms*, 21.

Structural analyses emphasize this functionality and lack of psychology even more than the traditional scholarship exemplified by Lüthi. In his classic structural work, *Morphology of the folktale*, Vladimir Propp writes that "the question of *what* a tale's dramatis personae do is an important one for the study of the tale, but the questions of *who* does it and *how* it is done already fall within the province of accessory study" (1968:20). According to Propp, characters so lack distinctive qualities that "one character in a tale is easily replaced by another" (1968:87). Moreover, he writes that "one may observe in general that the feelings and intentions of the dramatis personae do not have an effect on the course of action in any instances at all" (1968:78).

However, notwithstanding their one-dimensionality, folktale characters do represent certain characteristics that are either valued or despised, rewarded or punished, by the societies in which they function. The characters' qualities, then, including their physical and intellectual traits, their motivations, actions, and subsequent fates, reveal the values, standards of personal conduct, morality, and views of the individual prevalent in the societies portrayed in the tales. This chapter, the first of three focussing on the cultural content of the selected folktales, explores cultural values and perceptions of the individual, and ascertains through the examination and comparison of characters that the societies in these tales share moral standards and place a similar emphasis on the role the individual plays in defining his own destiny. In these societies adults are independent, thinking individuals who shape, and are held accountable for, their own destinies. However, these three groups of tales differ in their portrayals of the two genders, and, as well, in their association of an individual's physique with his psyche. Hence, in the image of society created by these tales, Burmese and

Euro-Canadian women have much more important roles to play than do Yoruba women. Furthermore, in the fictitious Burmese and Euro-Canadian societies, but not in the fictitious Yoruba societies, characters' inner qualities become manifest in their physical appearances.

PROTAGONISTS AND ANTAGONISTS

Table 1 on page 29 and Table 2 on page 30 list the protagonists and antagonists identified in each of the tales. It is their qualities, actions, and destinies which provide the main basis for determining values as embodied in the tales.

These protagonists and antagonists were identified by applying to each tale the definition supplied by M.H. Abrams: "The chief character of a work, on whom our interest centers, is called the **protagonist** or **hero**, and if he is pitted against an important opponent, ~~that~~ character is called an **antagonist**" (1971:128). However, in this study "protagonist" and "hero" are not considered to be synonymous terms. This dissertation distinguishes between the terms by adopting the structuralist definitions of "hero" and "villain" set forth by Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the folktale.* Propp defines the hero of a fairy tale as "that character who either directly suffers from the action of the villain in the complication (the one who senses some kind of lack), or who agrees to liquidate the misfortune or lack of another person. In the course of the action the hero is the person who is supplied with a magical agent (a magical helper), and who makes use of it or is served by it" (1968:50). According to Propp, there are two types of heroes: seekers and victimized heroes (1968:36). In contrast, the villain is a personage whose "role is to disturb the peace of a happy family, to cause some form of misfortune, damage, or harm" (1968:27).

TABLE 1

PROTAGONISTS[1]

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Tale	Protagonist	Tale	Protagonist	Tale	Protagonist
The crow and the wren	*the crow	Little Briar-rose	Briar-rose	1400 cowries	the cricket
The drunkard and the opium-eater	the drunkard; *the opium-eater	The louse and the flea		Ijapa and the hot water test	Ijapa
The rabbit has a cold	the rabbit	The peasant's wise daughter	the peasant's daughter	Oni and the great bird	Oni
The seven mendicants	*the inn-keeper	The sole	*the sole	Taking a sacrifice to heaven	the vulture
Why the vulture is bald	*the vulture	The wolf and the fox	the fox		

---

[1] With the exception of the inn-keeper, those protagonists whose names are marked with an asterisk are anti-heroes. The inn-keeper is neither a hero nor an anti-hero; his daughter is the hero in the tale.

TABLE 2

ANTAGONISTS[1]

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Tale	Antagonist	Tale	Antagonist	Tale	Antagonist
The crow and the wren	*the wren	Little Briar-rose	the thirteenth wise woman	1400 cowries	
The drunkard and the opium-eater	the ghosts	The louse and the flea		Ijapa and the hot water test	the chief
The rabbit has a cold	King Lion	The peasant's wise daughter	the king	Oni and the great bird	Anodo
The seven mendicants	the seven mendicants	The sole		Taking a sacrifice to heaven	the community
Why the vulture is bald	*the community of birds	The wolf and the fox	the wolf		

When the afore-mentioned definitions are applied to the characters of the tales selected for this study, it is apparent that in most instances the protagonist also turns out to be the hero, and, similarly, the antagonist also tends to be the anti-hero (or villain). Several tales, however, do not demonstrate such a correspondence, and hence reveal the need to distinguish between protagonist and hero, antagonist and anti-hero. The vulture, for instance, in Burma's *Why the vulture is bald*, is the central character commanding our interest, but his qualities are not heroic. Hence, although he is the protagonist, he is considered to be an anti-hero, and his antagonists, the other birds, are heroes. A similar situation occurs in Burma's *The crow and the wren* and Canada's *The sole*. In the former, the protagonist (the crow) is an anti-hero, and his antagonist (the wren) is a hero. In the latter, the sole is the protagonist and the anti-hero. As well, exceptions occur in two other tales from Burma. In *The seven mendicants* the inn-keeper is the protagonist, but his daughter is the hero. Moreover, although there are two protagonists in *The drunkard and the opium-eater*, only one of these, the drunkard, also serves as the hero. The second protagonist, the opium-eater, is, like the ghosts in the tale, anti-heroic.

---

[1] Those antagonists whose names are marked with an asterisk are heroes.

In addition, it has not always been possible to clearly identify a protagonist or an antagonist. In Canada's *The louse and the flea*, although the louse initiates the sequence of events by falling into the brew, she really does not assume any more importance than any other character in the tale. Since this tale has no protagonist, logically speaking there can be no antagonist if Abrams's definition is adhered to. At other times, notably in *The sole* and Yorubaland's *1400 cowries*, the protagonists are not pitted against clearly identifiable opponents. The sole is chastised by an unnamed agent: "Since that time the sole has been punished by having been given a mouth on one side."[1] In *1400 cowries* the protagonist, the cricket, has no main opponent. Hence these two tales are considered to be without antagonists.

---

[1] *The sole*, lines 20-21. All later references to this tale will appear in the body of the thesis as S. The following will also be used: *1400 cowries* (C); *The crow and the wren* (CW); *The drunkard and the opium-eater* (D); *Ijapa and the hot water test* (I); *Little Briar-rose* (L); *The louse and the flea* (LF); *Oni and the great bird* (O); *The peasant's wise daughter* (P); *The rabbit has a cold* (R); *The*

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF PROTAGONISTS AND ANTAGONISTS

In tales from all three cultures the physical descriptions of the main characters are very sketchy, with personal names, precise ages, physical dimensions, and features generally going unmentioned. All three cultures rely extensively on animal species for main characters. In such cases, with the exception of the Yoruba tortoise and eagle (Ijapa and Anodo), characters are not given personal names and full descriptions are omitted, perhaps because the audience for such tales would normally be assumed to possess adequate knowledge of and familiarity with these species of animals, thus negating the need for more detail. Moreover, when human characters appear in this corpus of tales, they are generally referred to by occupation or status (mendicants, inn-keepers, kings, peasants, daughters) and physical details are similarly lacking.

However, despite the economy of detail in the descriptions, the following observations can be made about the physical nature of the characters in the tales: they are all adults, males dominate in the Yoruba stories, and although the Burmese and Euro-Canadian heroes have very positive physical attributes, the same is not true of the Yoruba heroes. The tales, then, exhibit similarity in age preference and differ with respect to gender preference and treatment of beauty.

In only two of the tales are precise ages mentioned. Briar-rose (Canada) is fifteen years of age (L,34) when she pricks her finger on a spindle and falls

---

seven mendicants (SM); *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* (T); *Why the vulture is bald* (W); *The wolf and the fox* (WF).

asleep for 100 years. Oni (Yorubaland) is also a young adult, 18 years of age (O,3), when he discovers his immortality and begins his adventure. Although other characters are not given precise ages, they are, like Briar-rose and Oni, adults. In two tales, *The peasant's wise daughter* (Canada) and *1400 cowries* (Yorubaland), the protagonists are of marriageable age. Upon solving the king's riddle, the peasant's daughter marries the king and after sobering up, the cricket sets off to pay 1400 cowries in dowry money to his prospective father-in-law. In all other tales the protagonists and antagonists are assumed to be adults because they are independent and self-supporting, with their own homes, occupations, and families.

Although the important actors in the societies portrayed in these tales are adult, prominent and influential females occur only in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales. In contrast, the Yoruba stories are all male-dominated. Even though none of the Burmese protagonists are female, females do assume importance. In *The crow and the wren* the female wren acts as the heroic antagonist, outwitting the male crow by setting him a task he finds impossible to fulfil, thus rescuing not only herself, but also her daughter, from the unclean clutches of the male carnivore. Similarly, in *The seven mendicants* the two female characters, the inn-keeper's daughter and the Princess Learned-in-the-Law, again dominate the male characters. It is not until his wise daughter becomes involved that the inn-keeper's affairs are straightened out and it is Princess Learned-in-the-Law who acts as the supreme justice in the case. All of the male characters defer to her judgement.

The Princess's Euro-Canadian counterpart, the peasant's wise daughter, is similarly sage, and more than an intellectual and moral match for her husband and antagonist, the king. She predicts the king's rather petty demand for the pestle when he is made a present of a golden mortar, easily solves his riddle, and is aware, although the king apparently is not, that oxen do not beget foals. Finally, when the king banishes her with the proviso that she might take along "the one thing that [is] dearest and best in her eyes" (P,92-93), she once again surpasses him by simply drugging and transporting him along with her to her peasant's hut. The thirteenth wise woman in *Little Briar-rose* also wields considerable power over males. The king is completely powerless to nullify the curse she places on his infant daughter. Briar-rose herself, although she is much more passive than the other females, nevertheless assumes a central role in this tale as the innocent victim and a prize worth striving for.

In contrast to the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales, the tales told in Yorubaland contain no noteworthy females. All of the protagonists and antagonists are male. Some very minor female characters do occur in *1400 cowries* (the old woman and the woman with a baby) and in *Ijapa and the hot water test* (Ijapa's wife, women and girls of the village), but they are not in any way outstanding figures of central, or even of any, importance to the plots of these tales. The societies portrayed in the Yoruba tales are thus much more male-oriented than those of the Burmese or the Euro-Canadian tales.

Aside from gender orientation, a second major difference between these groups of tales is in their treatment of beauty. In none of the tales studied is beauty alone considered sufficient grounds for adulation, although the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales stress beauty to a greater extent than do the Yoruba tales. As Table 3 on page 36 shows, in the majority of the tales studied, heroes lack description. However, where details do occur, in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales the characters' inner qualities are manifested in their outer appearance. Heroes have positive physiques; anti-heroes have negative physiques. This is not the case in the Yoruba tales.

Beauty is not the outstanding characteristic of any of the heroes listed in the "Positive" categories of Table 3.[1] The fox, for instance, is agile rather than beautiful. Of the other characters with positive physical attributes, the inn-keeper's daughter in *The seven mendicants* is a "beautiful young woman" (SM,43-44), but the tale focusses on her cleverness. The king, for example, marries her because she is smart enough to solve his riddle, not because he is enamoured with her appearance. In *Why the vulture is bald* the birds are assumed to be quite lovely because it is with their feathers that the vulture blossoms from a passably good-looking bird into a magnificent multicoloured creature. Nevertheless, these philanthropic birds are notable for their wisdom, compassion, and sense of justice rather than for their comeliness.

Beauty does not, of course, detract from a character's appeal. The wren in *The crow and the wren* claims that she is unable to surrender her clean, sweet daughter into the callous clutches of the crow because his beak is dirty (CW,12-15). As unlikely as she might be to relinquish her daughter to a more comely crow, she nevertheless appears to value cleanliness. Physical appearance is also important to the king in the Euro-Canadian *Little Briar-rose:* "the Queen had a little girl who was so pretty that the King could not contain himself for joy" (L,7-8). It is not clear that the king would have been

---

[1] Beauty is culturally-defined and hence such positive qualities as agility may be equated with beauty by members of the tales' source cultures.

TABLE 3

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF HEROES

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Positive	Negative	Not Known	Positive	Negative	Not Known	Positive	Negative	Not Known
The seven mendicants --the innkeeper's daughter		The crow and the wren --the wren	Little Briar-rose --Briar-rose		The louse and the flea		Taking a sacrifice to heaven --the vulture	1400 cowries
Why the vulture is bald --the birds		The drunkard and the opium-eater --the drunkard	The wolf and the fox --the fox		The peasant's wise daughter --the daughter			Ijapa and the hot water test --Ijapa
		The rabbit has a cold --the rabbit			The sole			Oni and the great bird --Oni

overjoyed had he and his wife produced an ugly infant. However, as in the Burmese tales, Briar-rose's appeal is the result, not simply of her beauty, but also of her personality; "she was so beautiful, modest, good-natured, and wise, that everyone who saw her was bound to love her" (L,31-33). Thus, although beauty does not at all overshadow other characteristics, the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales do seem to equate physical beauty with inner goodness. Table 3 indicates that this connection is not made in the Yoruba tales: the only hero whose physical appearance can be assessed is the vulture, who is described as being "ugly" (T,64).

As Table 4 on page 38 shows, both the Euro-Canadian and the Burmese tales draw a strong parallel between negative physical features and a lack of virtue. Where physical imperfections occur in these tales, they belong to the anti-heroes and reflect mental or spiritual inferiority. For example, in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* the wolf's mental slowness is reflected in his physical ineptitude. He is so clumsy that he repeatedly bumbles his attempts to steal food, always being caught and punished.

In addition, physical defects are often the result of inappropriate or unheroic behaviour. Another Euro-Canadian anti-hero, the sole, receives a mouth placed to one side as punishment for his poor sportsmanship and spiteful remarks after losing a fair race to a better competitor, the herring (S,20-21). In the Burmese tale *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the opium-eater acquires a three-yard-long nose because, unable to remain vigilant, he falls asleep in the ghosts' abode and is subsequently discovered and punished by the ghosts themselves. In *The crow and the wren* and *The rabbit has a cold* both of the anti-social characters, the crow and King Lion, have hygiene problems. The wren accuses the crow of having a dirty beak because he eats "all sorts of rubbish" (CW,12). King Lion explains that his halitosis is the natural result of being carnivorous: "'Everyone knows that only a foul smell can come out of my mouth as I am a great meat-eater'" (R,28-29). Actions and appearance are therefore intertwined.

TABLE 4

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF ANTI-HEROES

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Positive	Negative	Not Known	Positive	Negative	Not Known	Positive	Negative	Not Known
	The crow and the wren --the crow	The seven mendicants		The sole --the sole	Little Briar-rose --the thirteenth wise woman	Taking a sacrifice to heaven --the birds		1400 cowries
	The drunkard and the opium-eater --the opium-eater			The wolf and the fox --the wolf	The louse and the flea			Ijapa and the hot water test
	The rabbit has a cold --King Lion				The peasant's wise daughter --the king			Oni and the great bird --Anodo
	Why the vulture is bald --the vulture							

This view that physical characteristics complement inner qualities is particularly evident in the Burmese etiological tale, *Why the vulture is bald.* This tale, like its Yoruba counterpart, *Taking a sacrifice to heaven,* explains the ugly appearance of the vulture as the result of his behaviour. Interestingly, these two tales reveal similar standards of beauty, since in both cases the vulture is regarded as an ugly bird. However, the Burmese tale equates beauty and goodness, and the Yoruba tale does not.

In the Burmese tale the vulture's physical appearance serves as the outer manifestation of his inner emotional state. In the beginning, the vulture is "a humble old bird and rather stupid" (W,1-2), and his plumage is "not exceptionally beautiful, but quite passable" (W,2-3). However, as the vulture begins to moult, his equanimity disappears and he becomes increasingly worried about his appearance. His depression is reflected in his physique and he becomes "thin and sickly" (W,7-8). Then, with the addition of the beautiful feathers, the vulture's pride expands to the point where he asks to be recognized as the king. Once the vulture has been denuded of his feathers as punishment for his insolence, his personality degenerates, and in the end he is a "sour and ugly old bird" (W,22-23). His inner and outer states are in agreement.

In contrast, in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the most self-centred, selfish, and shallow characters are also the most beautiful:

> [the other birds] were far more interested in flying around and displaying their great beauty to each other. . . .
>
> The ega thought his gold and black plumage the most beautiful of any . . . . The olokshe was mating, and was very conspicuous because of his beautiful long tail and his magnificent black and white plumage (T,11-24).

The most virtuous character, the vulture, is also the least handsome. In fact, where the Burmese vulture's loss of feathers was a well-deserved punishment for his insolence, the Yoruba vulture's baldness occurs as the result of his exemplary and selfless behaviour in undertaking the hazardous journey to heaven:

> The vulture was now more bedraggled and ugly than ever. He was soaked with rain and the fire from the sacrifice had burnt the feathers from the top of his head and neck. . . . His burnt feathers never grew again, a reminder to the selfish people who refused to help him (T,64-72).

Thus, it appears that beauty is much more closely associated with virtue and hence is a much more desirable quality in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales than in the Yoruba tales, which seem to warn against deceptive appearances.

RETRIBUTION AND INTELLECTUAL ATTRIBUTES

This section of chapter two examines the rewards and punishments of the protagonists and antagonists, their intellectual abilities, and their moral qualities to determine which values are emphasized in each culture's tales. Although Max Lüthi writes that "it is not virtue that is the distinguishing characteristic of the folktale hero" (1982:89) and that "one cannot even speak of the characters of folktale as being intelligent" (1982:15), this analysis finds that, with the exception of the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tricksters (the fox and Ijapa), the heroes of the tales examined in this study are both intelligent and virtuous. The tales from each culture emphasize wisdom, temperance, fortitude, justice, and generosity. In addition, the Burmese tales stress loyalty.

Wisdom is a desirable trait in each culture's tales. With the exception of the vulture in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*, all of the characters who are rewarded in some way are wise, and those characters (again, excepting the birds in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*) who suffer losses lack this particular quality.

TABLE 5

TALES IN WHICH PROTAGONISTS RECEIVE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Gain	Loss	Gain	Loss	Gain	Loss
The drunkard and the opium-eater	The crow and the wren	Little Briar-rose	The sole	1400 cowries	Taking a sacrifice to heaven
The rabbit has a cold	Why the vulture is bald	The peasant's wise daughter		Ijapa and the hot water test	
The seven mendicants		The wolf and the fox		Oni and the great bird	

TABLE 6

TALES IN WHICH ANTAGONISTS RECEIVE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Gain	Loss	Gain	Loss	Gain	Loss
The crow and the wren	The drunkard and the opium-eater	The peasant's wise daughter	The wolf and the fox	Taking a sacrifice to heaven	Oni and the great bird
The seven mendicants					

Some characters have unsubstantiated reputations for being prudent. For instance, although Briar-rose is said to be wise (L,32), she does nothing to demonstrate that this is so. Other characters are more obviously intelligent, demonstrating superior knowledge, foresight, or sheer cunning. In all cases, wisdom means power.

The protagonists who possess more knowledge than their antagonists also have power over those antagonists. In Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the drunkard possesses numeracy skills that the ghosts lack. Because they are unable to count their own numbers, the ghosts are fooled on two different occasions into believing that no human is in their midst. Because the ghosts fail to identify the drunkard as an intruder, the drunkard elicits from them knowledge that he would otherwise be denied. Thus, although the ghosts would never knowingly assist a human, the drunkard is rewarded with seven pots of gold and the medical knowledge for treating the opium-eater's nose. In *Why the vulture is bald* (Burma) the birds are extremely self-aware, understanding, where the "rather stupid" (W,2) vulture does not, that the vulture is simply moulting. These knowledgeable birds exert much influence over the vulture, first providing him with additional feathers and then removing them when the vulture becomes unbearable. In *The seven mendicants*, also from Burma, the inn-keeper is fortunate enough to have a wise daughter who, together with the Princess Learned-in-the-Law, manages to resolve his difficulties. The Princess herself, because she possesses great knowledge of the law, is, as a judge, firmly ensconced in a very powerful societal position. Finally, the thirteenth wise woman in *Little Briar-rose* (Canada) appears to have greater knowledge of magic than the other characters, producing such a powerful curse that her more amiable colleague can only weaken, but not destroy, it.

Some characters are able to improve their lots in life through foresight, caution, and cleverness. It is conceivable that the wren in Burma's *The crow and the wren* anticipates that the crow will be unable to perform the cleansing ritual that she demands. The crow, in contrast, shows a deplorable lack of foresight both in relinquishing the motherly wren on her promise that she will deliver her beloved daughter for destruction, and in his failure to anticipate that he will be unable to carry fire in his beak. Hence he loses everything--the wren, the fire, the assistance of the other characters, and the wren's daughter.

The rabbit in *The rabbit has a cold* (Burma) foresees that he must avoid giving the king a direct answer if he is to escape with his life. Hence, he secures his freedom by simply apologizing for having a cold and being thus unable to express an opinion on what kind of smell issues from the king's mouth. The peasant's daughter in *The peasant's wise daughter* (Canada) is also able to secure her future through a clever response to a royal request. When the king sets her a riddle, she finds it a simple matter to provide a correct response, thus compelling the king to fulfil his promise by marrying her. In both of these tales the antagonists are demonstrably foolish, although neither appears to suffer a substantial loss. King Lion foolishly dispenses with ministers he knows to be honest, loyal, and wise; he loses a potentially tasty meal when the rabbit escapes his clutches, but his own position in society does not appear to be compromised in any way. Similarly, the king in *The peasant's wise daughter* rashly banishes the queen from the court. In this case the king loses nothing, except face, because his wise and loving wife remains faithful to him.

Two characters who profit rather undeservedly from their ability to out-think their opponents are the fox in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* and Ijapa in Yorubaland's *Ijapa and the hot water test.* The fox is understandably anxious to rid himself of the tyrannical wolf, and he takes drastic measures to do so. The fox is able to turn the wolf's greed and stupidity to his own advantage by tempting the wolf to gorge himself to such an extent that he can no longer squeeze through the escape hole. Consequently, the wolf is unable to evade the vengeful farmer, who kills him. Thus, while gaining his freedom from the wolf, the fox becomes an accomplice in the wolf's murder. Moreover, although the fox is commanded by the wolf to procure food ("'Red-fox, get me something to eat or else I will eat you yourself'" (WF,5-6)), it is the fox who devises the means--thievery. At no time does the fox ever express regret that he must resort to such measures. In fact, his moralizing never includes forbidding the wolf to steal; he simply warns him to limit what he steals: "'Why are you such a glutton?'" (WF,17). The fox's success is therefore much more the result of his acumen than of his angelic behaviour.

Nor can the Yoruba trickster, Ijapa, be described as a paragon of virtue. Ijapa channels his intellect into concocting nefarious schemes intended to benefit no one but himself. Not only does he possess the cunning to successfully steal the chief's yams in broad daylight and in the presence of several witnesses, but he is also able to trick his wary judge into proclaiming him innocent of the charge of theft. At his trial Ijapa manages to have his innocent co-workers indicted for theft because, feigning respect for his elders, he insists that the others drink first, thus delaying his own contact with the boiling water until it has cooled. Because Ijapa suffers no burns from his consumption of the water, he is proclaimed innocent. Thus, because of his cunning, Ijapa is rewarded with a favourable verdict from his imprudent and credulous opponent, the chief. Although the chief's reliance on trial by ordeal to determine innocence or guilt might be explained by reference to his religious beliefs, the chief's reliance on Ijapa during the trial is less easily understood. Despite his knowledge of Ijapa's reputation (I,44), he still follows Ijapa's advice, unwisely treats Ijapa like a trusted advisor, and in the end fails to uncover the truth about the stolen yams, declaring Ijapa innocent and his loyal subjects guilty.

Imprudent characters thus tend to suffer losses in these stories. One noteworthy exception to this occurs in the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. In this tale the vacant-minded birds flit about frivolously, totally unconcerned about the serious and impending environmental disaster surrounding them. It is the intelligent vulture who recognizes that the gods must be appeased, and that he, in the absence of any other volunteers, must, as an act of social responsibility, undertake what he knows will be a difficult journey. Unfortunately, although everyone benefits from the rains, the vulture himself loses his home and his feathers. Nevertheless, his reputation remains untarnished, and the other birds are dismissed as "selfish" (T,71). Thus, once again, the prudent character is the one who warrants admiration.

Besides wisdom, these folktale heroes display temperance. They are not, however, teetotalers: they do have access to drugs and alcohol. The hero of the Burmese tale *The drunkard and the opium-eater* is an alcoholic. The queen in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* drinks farewell to the king before drugging him with a sleeping potion. (The beverage they share is presumably something stronger than water.) In *The louse and the flea* the louse and the flea brew beer in their home (LF,1), and the cricket in the Yoruba *1400 cowries* becomes intoxicated after drinking palm wine. In *1400 cowries* the fact that the palm-wine seller is also the money-lender (C,4) suggests that the consumption of alcohol is fairly widespread and its sale a profitable enterprise in that society.

However, the heroes of these tales are models of self-restraint and moderation. No matter the provocation, the hero remains in full control of his emotions and his wits. Despite being unjustly accused of perfidy and consequently evicted from her home, the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter* refrains from expressing any anger or sorrow, saying merely: "'Yes, my dear husband, if you command this, I will do it'" (P,93-94). In *The seven mendicants* the inn-keeper similarly fails to rail against the agent of his distress, the youngest mendicant, who has stolen the silver. He never expresses any regrets about his change of status from an independent businessman to a slave with six masters. Other characters remain very calm in the face of danger. The rabbit in *The rabbit has a cold* is facing an almost certain death and yet has the presence of mind to formulate a non-committal and non-offensive answer to the king's question, thus preserving his life. The drunkard in *The drunkard and the opium-eater*, despite his intoxication, controls himself so well that the ghosts believe he is one of them. Ijapa, the Yoruba trickster, is not in the least subdued by the unpleasant circumstances in which he finds himself. Faced with the unwelcome task of harvesting the chief's fields, he simply turns this into an opportunity to fill his own empty storehouse. Unable to avoid the hot water test, Ijapa simply takes charge during the trial, deflecting the blame and the punishment onto innocent others. Ijapa's emotions never dominate his actions--not fear, not anger, and certainly not remorse.

In the absence of temperance, disaster ensues. Although some "immoderate" characters appear to go unpunished, they are nevertheless unworthy of emulation in these tales. The thirteenth wise woman in *Little Briar-rose* makes no attempt to control her anger at being excluded from the king's feast. She vindictively curses the innocent infant, a deed which is considered to be very evil (L,26). In *The rabbit has a cold* two of King Lion's faithful subjects are killed simply to satisfy a whim of King Lion's which should be stifled, but is not. In *The louse and the flea* no character exercises restraint in his commiseration and in the end everyone dies. The cricket in *1400 cowries* fails to temper his alcohol consumption, and this results in a huge societal debt. In these cases, everyone suffers.

Sometimes the perpetrators themselves suffer as a result of their excesses. The fox in *The wolf and the fox* counsels moderation, repeatedly asking the wolf: "'Why are you such a glutton?'" (WF,17,34), even warning him directly on one occasion: "'Don't eat too much'" (WF,50). The wolf does not heed this advice and hence seals his own fate--death from greediness. Other rapacious characters are harshly dealt with as well. In *The crow and the wren* the crow wishes for a more tender meal and ends up losing his supper. In *Why the vulture is bald* the egoistic vulture's desire for adulation is effectively curbed when the source of his arrogance (his beauty) is marred by the loss of his feathers. The sole, in Canada's *The sole,* does not control his jealousy and he ends up with an oddly-positioned mouth.

In addition to wisdom and temperance, a third value embedded in these tales appears to be fortitude. Many of the heroes are very brave and possess great inner strength. They are aware of the hazards confronting them and strive for their goals regardless. For instance, the prince in *Little Briar-rose* has been informed by both his grandfather and the old man of the perils he will face in seeking out Briar-rose, but he remains committed to his self-imposed quest:

> He had heard, too, from his grandfather, that many kings' sons had already come, and had tried to get through the thorny hedge, but they had remained sticking fast in it, and had died a pitiful death. Then the youth said: 'I am not afraid, I will go and see the beautiful Briar-rose.' The good old man might dissuade him as he would, he did not listen to his words (L,75-80).

Similarly, in *Oni and the great bird* both Oni's host (the old man) and the King of Ajo attempt unsuccessfully to dissuade Oni from challenging Anodo:

> Oni returned to the old man's house and told him what had happened, and of his intention to challenge Anodo. The old man was very frightened and implored him to give up the idea, for he would only perish and perhaps all those in the house too. But Oni was not frightened. He took his bow and arrows and knives and examined them carefully (O,89-94).

In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the vulture is also aware that he undertakes "an arduous task" (T,45-46), but he too, like the prince and Oni, is undeterred by his knowledge.

The actions of many other characters also show evidence of inner strength. For the sake of her father, the inn-keeper's daughter in *The seven mendicants* pledges her social status as collateral for her loan: "The Daughter then went with her Mother to the Village Headman and borrowed six hundred silver pieces, on the security that they would become his slaves if the money was not paid back with interest within one year" (SM,57-61). Although she is confident that she will win the case, she nevertheless risks her own freedom to liberate her father from his slavery. This requires strength of character. Another female, the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter*, risks the king's great displeasure in assisting a peasant whom she feels has been treated unjustly. Aware that her actions will incur the king's wrath, she extracts from the peasant the promise not to betray her (P,68-69). Yet when she is betrayed, she calmly accepts her punishment--the king's severance of ties with her. She is strong enough to withstand his fury.

The sheer audacity of the behaviour of some of the other characters is also noteworthy. In *Why the vulture is bald* the vulture presents a bold front to his benefactors, seemingly unaware that he risks their displeasure. At other times, characters are cognizant of the difficulties they must surmount. After deciding to spend the night in the ghosts' abode, the drunkard in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* sustains himself with alcohol: "When night came the Drunkard went to the rest-house, after fortifying himself with many pots of today [sic]" (D,70-72). Perhaps it is the alcohol which enables the drunkard to boldly impersonate a ghost, but his decision to return to the ghosthouse to help his friend despite his fears is a brave one.

A final example of nervy effrontery comes from Ijapa in *Ijapa and the hot water test.* This traiterous tortoise, first risks discovery by stealing in broad daylight and then evades a well-deserved punishment by daring to conduct himself as the chief's wise and trusted advisor. Moreover, his audacity is rewarded when he is proclaimed innocent.

Wisdom, temperance, and fortitude thus appear to be valued in the tales from all three cultures. These tales also show great similarity in their treatment of justice, with heroes displaying a strong sense of justice and anti-heroes generally being portrayed as unjust.

Most of the characters have a strong sense of justice, even if their actions serve to obstruct real justice. For example, it is in response to a perceived insult that the thirteenth wise woman in *Little Briar-rose* exacts her revenge, cursing the innocent babe. As another example, in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the ghosts rather viciously attack the opium-eater on the grounds that he is human: "When they saw that he was a human being, they pulled his nose until it became full three yards long" (D,58-60). The opium-eater has not done anything; his offense is his humanness. In each instance, although the antagonists have reasons for their actions, the victims are undeserving of punishment, and hence these actions are unjust.

The heroic characters, of course, have a true understanding of, and a desire to mete out, justice (as opposed to vengeance). In *Why the vulture is bald* the birds who peck away the vulture's feathers are chastizing him for his effrontery. This is a reasonable and fitting punishment for the crime. In *The peasant's wise daughter* the queen redresses the wrong the peasant suffers at the king's hands by providing him with the words with which to press his suit: "'It is as easy for me to fish on dry land as it is for an ox to have a foal'" (P,78-79). Similarly, in *The seven mendicants* the impartial Princess Learned-in-the-Law, guided by her knowledge of the law, finally terminates the exploitative situation from which the inn-keeper had not been able to extract himself.

This court of law, presided over by Princess Learned-in-the-Law, is one of the few examples of an efficient judicial system in this corpus of tales. Aside from the two Yoruba kings in *Oni and the great bird* and *1400 cowries*, none of the other characters who are formally empowered by society to dispense justice produces legitimate verdicts. In *Oni and the great bird* the king, as he had earlier promised to do, generously rewards Oni with half a kingdom. At the same time, the imposter who had claimed the reward as his own is executed. In *1400 cowries* the king punishes no one, but quickly forestalls further offense and divine retribution by providing funds for the debt.

In all other courts presided over by anti-heroes a travesty is made of justice. The king in *The peasant's wise daughter* takes the liberty of imprisoning anyone who displeases him. He impounds his future father-in-law because he refuses to believe that the peasant has not retained for himself a golden pestle for the mortar. On another occasion, the king condones the imprisonment and torture of an impudent peasant: "So they laid him on a heap of straw, and beat him and tormented him so long that at last he admitted that he had got the idea from the Queen" (P,85-87). This unscrupulous king abuses the justice system for his own ends.

Other anti-heroic monarchs also make a mockery of justice. The chief in *Ijapa and the hot water test* does, by his own declaration, seek the truth. He expresses his intentions to the witnesses at Ijapa's trial:

> 'Ijapa has been accused of stealing yams. He denies it. For this reason he will take the test. He will drink a bowl of the boiling water. If he is guilty, he will feel great pain. If he innocent, he will not be harmed. In this way we shall know the truth' (I,59-64).

Strictly speaking, the chief's verdict that Ijapa is innocent is a just verdict because the chief adheres to the conditions he laid out for the hot water test. Ijapa did not feel any pain, and hence, according to the chief's own strictures, Ijapa had to be declared innocent. The problem, however, is that the chief is wrong: Ijapa is guilty. Thus, when the chief declares Ijapa innocent, the truth is officially suppressed, the innocent are punished, and justice is definitely not served.

A third perversion of justice occurs at the hands of King Lion in the Burmese tale *The rabbit has a cold.* In this tale King Lion deliberately uses the justice system to whitewash his own terrible abuses of his power and of the law. Pretending to purge his ministry of traitors, he assassinates his ministers simply because he has become "tired of their company" (R,3-4) and "as he himself had chosen them to be his ministers, he had to think of an excuse which would give a semblance of legality to his unjust act" (R,5-7). King Lion, therefore, like other anti-heroes, perpetrates injustice.

In addition to wisdom, temperance, fortitude, and justice, generosity is also emphasized in these tales. There is evidence of generosity in all of the tales. Characters share their material possessions, lend their assistance to and risk their lives for others. The drunkard in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* shares his new-found wealth with his friend, the opium-eater: "He bought a house, and lived in luxury with his friend the Opium-eater" (D,34-35). The old man in *Oni and the great bird* offers hospitality to a stranger, Oni, giving him food, shelter, and advice. The birds in *Why the vulture is bald* respond to the vulture's misery by lending him their own feathers. That the seven mendicants have managed to amass a fortune of 600 silver pieces is evidence of generous alms-giving on the part of others. In *The peasant's wise daughter,* upon hearing of their poverty, the king presents the peasant and his daughter with a piece of land (P,4-5). The gesture is reciprocated in the peasant's presentation to the king of a golden mortar as a token of appreciation. The king in *1400 cowries,* concerned about his subjects' accumulated debt, provides them with 1400 cowries from his own treasury (C,152), and the king in *Oni and the great bird* rewards penniless Oni with half a kingdom for killing Anodo.

Many heroes risk their comfort, or even their lives, for the sake of others. The queen in *The peasant's wise daughter* jeopardizes her position by helping a poor peasant. The vulture in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* undertakes a hazardous journey to heaven to appease the gods and alleviate the suffering of his community, losing his own home and his personal well-being in the process. The drunkard returns to the ghost-house for the sake of his friend, and Oni risks his life for others by participating in the defense of his home village (O,3-9) and in ridding Ajo society of the unwelcome and malevolent visitor, Anodo.

Anti-heroes are usually not generous. The community of birds in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* is "selfish" (T,71), the sole in *The sole* has only uncharitable words for the herring ("the naked herring" (S,19)). The ghosts in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* are niggardly, resenting the loss of the gold even though they can have no possible use for it themselves. Finally, the only generosity Ijapa displays is his desire to deflect the blame for his theft of the chief's yams onto those who have had nothing to do with it. Selfish in the extreme, Ijapa does not willingly give of himself although he is quick to take from others. Rather than devoting his best efforts to harvesting the chief's yams, Ijapa expends his energy stealing those yams for himself.

Finally, one additional value particularly evident in the Burmese tales is fidelity--to friends, family, and masters. Even after he acquires a fortune, the drunkard remains loyal to the opium-eater. He shares his home and his sympathy with the opium-eater, sticking by him even when the opium-eater has become the laughing stock of the community: "'Friend,' consoled the Drunkard, 'I will go to night [sic], and find out the cure for your long nose'" (D,68-70). The wren, who had gained her freedom from the crow by rather callously promising him her daughter, does remain loyal to her daughter by refusing to surrender her when the crow comes calling. In *The seven mendicants* the enslaved inn-keeper serves his masters "faithfully for a number of years" (SM,40), and the society ruled by King Lion in *The rabbit has a cold* clearly despises disloyalty, having instated the death penalty for treason: "'Rank treason,' roared the Lion in anger. 'You insult the king to his face. The punishment for treason is death.' So saying he pounced upon the Bear and killed him" (R,17-20). It is true that in this tale treason becomes a handy excuse for a murderous tyrant. However, this might be interpreted not as a rejection of loyalty as a worthy value, but rather as a warning that societal values (such as loyalty) can be manipulated for evil purposes.

This stress on loyalty is not evident to the same extent in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. Although characters remain faithful to their ideals, they do not, with the possible exception of the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter*, display excessive loyalty to others. Sometimes they are downright disloyal. The fox betrays the wolf, Ijapa robs his chief, and even the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter* sides with a peasant against her husband, the king. As well, in *The louse and the flea* inordinate and thoughtless loyalty to others in the form of commiseration has disastrous consequences for those characters: they all die in the ensuing flood.

Thus, this section of chapter two reveals that the tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland appear to project similar values. The following attributes are generally considered desirable: wisdom, temperance, fortitude, justice, and generosity. However, a slight difference between the three groups surfaces in the treatment of loyalty, which is stressed to a much greater extent in the Burmese tales than in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. The following section of this chapter further explores the values embedded in these tales by concentrating on the concept of individuality.

INDIVIDUALITY

The degree to which the societies portrayed in the tales value individuality can be determined by examining the characters' motivations, their independence, and the extent to which they are held accountable for their own actions. The study of a character's independence and accountability to society reveals the extent to which that fictitious society is individual-centred (valuing individuality over group interests) or group-centred (valuing collective interests more than individual interests). Thus, if a fictitious society is populated by independent characters who are not held accountable for their actions and beliefs, it is reasonable to conclude that that society values individuality. When characters are self-motivated (that is, exhibiting personal initiative and independent thinking ability), they become distinct from one another; in other words, motivations become an expression of individuality. If the inhabitants of a fictitious society are all self-motivated, and particularly if individuals possessing that quality are rewarded, that society values, or at least tolerates, individuality. Thus, the study of motivations, despite the fact that folklorists discount their importance to characterization, is pertinent to the study of the values projected by folktales.

Neither the structuralist perspective of Vladimir Propp nor the traditional scholarship advanced by Max Lüthi attach great significance to the motivations of characters. Of motivations, Propp writes the following:

> By motivations are meant both the reasons and the aims of personages which cause them to commit various acts. Motivations often add to a tale a completely distinctive, vivid coloring, but nevertheless motivations belong to the most inconstant and unstable elements of the tale. . . .
>
> The majority of characters' acts in the middle of a tale are naturally motivated by the course of the action, and only villainy, as the first basic function of the tale, requires a certain supplementary motivation.
>
> Here one may observe that completely identical or similar acts are motivated in the most varied ways. Expulsion and casting someone adrift are motivated by: a stepmother's hatred, a quarrel over an inheritance among brothers, envy, a fear of competition (Iván the merchant), an unequal marriage (Iván the peasant's son and a princess), suspicion of marital infidelity, a prophecy about a son's humiliation in the presence of his parents. In all of these cases expulsion is motivated by the greedy, evil, envious, suspicious character of the villain. But expulsion can be motivated by the unsavory character of the person exiled. Expulsion here assumes the nature of a certain form of justice. A son or grandson causes trouble or makes a fool of himself (tears off the arms and legs of passers-by). The townspeople complain. . . and the grandfather drives out his grandson. . . . It is a *quality* of the hero, expressed in the acts which serve as the motive for his expulsion.
>
> We notice that the actions of a dragon and of very many other villains are not in any way motivated by the tale (1968:75-76).

Furthermore, Propp discounts motivations as having any significance either in definition of character or in development of plot:

> the will of the personages, their intentions, cannot be considered as an essential motif for their definition. The important thing is not what they want to do, nor how they feel, but their deeds as such, evaluated and defined from the viewpoint of their meaning for the hero and for the course of the action. . . the feelings of a dispatcher (be they hostile, neutral or friendly) do not influence the course of the action (1968:81).

Like Propp, Lüthi also suggests that personal motivation is not an important aspect of characterization because characters follow the dictates of the plot and do not possess independent or private thoughts, emotions, or plans. Lüthi writes:

> Not internal emotions but external impulses propel the characters of the folktale onward. They are impelled and guided by gifts, discoveries, tasks, suggestions, prohibitions, miraculous aids, challenges, difficulties, and lucky happenstances, not by the promptings of their hearts. . . . Wherever possible, the folktale expresses internal feelings through external events, psychological motivations through external impulses (1982:15).

Lüthi makes a valid point when he explains that in the folktale internal feelings materialize into external and concrete stimuli. Nevertheless, when he states that characters are impelled by suggestions, prohibitions, and challenges, and not "by the promptings of their hearts" he appears to deny that characters in folktales are self-motivated.

These folktale characters do, as Propp and Lüthi say, respond to external stimuli. They react to the circumstances and environments in which they find themselves. Nevertheless, in this study characters are considered to be self-motivated if they themselves show personal initiative and independent thinking ability. Self-motivated characters make conscious and informed decisions about their actions and their lives without blindly following the advice or dictates of others.

All of the main characters in this corpus of folktales are self-motivated. In fact, many of them, contrary to what Lüthi asserts, are guided by the promptings of their own hearts. Briar-rose serves as an example. Left alone in the palace on her fifteenth birthday, Briar-rose satisfies her curiosity about her home by exploring her surroundings:

> It happened that on the very day when she was fifteen years old the King and Queen were not at home, and the maiden was left in the palace quite alone. So she went round into all sorts of places, looked into rooms and bed-chambers just as she liked, and at last came to an old tower (L,34-38).

Left to her own devices, Briar-rose has no trouble amusing herself. She is not impelled by a gift, discovery, task, or suggestion, but rather merely follows the prompting of her own heart. Thus Briar-rose, despite her reputation as a passive folktale character, does show initiative on occasion.

Characters' actions are frequently dictated by intense emotions. Rage and jealousy provoke angry outbursts from the thirteenth wise woman in *Little Briar-rose* and the sole in *The sole*. Furious at being excluded from a high society dinner and wishing to avenge this insult (L,19-20), the thirteenth wise woman places on Briar-rose one of the most famous curses of Euro-Canadian folk literature: "'The King's daughter shall in her fifteenth year prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead'" (L,21-22). The sole, envious of the successful herring, spitefully calls that character "naked" (S,19).

Characters experiencing anger and jealousy perform malevolent acts. In addition, avarice is also a powerful motivating force behind anti-social activity. The crow, the wolf, the youngest mendicant, the king in *The peasant's wise daughter*, and Ijapa are all driven by greed. When the crow learns that the wren has a young daughter, the prospect of eating the wren no longer pleases him: "The Crow thought to himself, 'This Wren is old and tough, but her daughter will be young and soft,' and so he suggested to the Wren, 'I will let you go if you will promise to give me your daughter to eat on the seventh day from now'" (CW,4-8). It is thus greed that leads the Crow to release the Wren, thereby losing his meal. The wolf of *The wolf and the fox* is similarly unable to control the rapacious rumblings of his stomach. He repeatedly threatens the fox: "'Red-fox, get me something to eat, or else I will eat you yourself'" (WF,5-6). Although the fox always complies with the wolf's demands, the wolf's appetite is never satiated: "the fox stole the little lamb, took it to the wolf, and went away. The wolf devoured it, but was not satisfied with one; he wanted the other as well, and went to get it" (WF,8-11). Because the wolf is never satisfied, he repeatedly emulates the fox, always unsuccessfully, and, in the end, becomes so bloated from overeating that he cannot escape from a very vengeful farmer.

The youngest mendicant, like Ijapa, desires to possess the wealth of others. Acting independently, the mendicant steals 600 silver pieces from his companions. Ijapa unashamedly covets his chief's harvest and plots to possess it:

> It is said that one time Ijapa was called upon to come and help harvest the chief's fields. The idea interested Ijapa because he had neglected to care for his own fields, which therefore had produced nothing, while the chief's fields were full of yams. He thought about how he might use the occasion to fill his empty storehouse (I,1-7).

Unable to avoid community service, Ijapa simply devises a way to profit from the unwanted toil. He makes no attempt to quash his desires. These two characters seize the opportunities as they arise to illicitly increase their personal wealth. They are simultaneously very enterprising, unscrupulously self-seeking, and, of course, self-motivated.

Other characters also act alone and on impulse. The capricious King Lion in *The rabbit has a cold* suddenly craves the deaths of his ministers. Not provoked by anger or envy or even greed, the Lion simply becomes "tired of their company, and want[s] to kill and eat them" (R,3-4). Unwilling to accept any opposition, King Lion immediately acts on his impulse, killing two of the three ministers and threatening the third. Another character who acts on a whim, with much less harmful consequences, is the drunkard in *The drunkard and the opium-eater*. For reasons of his own, the drunkard suddenly decides to spend the night in the ghosts' abode, a place he has hitherto avoided. Far from blindly following the dictates of others, the drunkard acts independently and against the advice of his friend the opium-eater:

> Having no house of their own, they spent their time in the various rest-houses of the village. But they avoided one particular rest-house, namely the one at the cemetery, for all believed that it was the meeting place of the ghosts of the village every night. One evening, however, the Drunkard was more intoxicated than usual and, in spite of the entreaties and warnings of his friend the Opium-eater, he went to spend the night at the cemetery rest-house, taking with him many pots of toddy (D,3-12).

Although alcohol seems to make the drunkard more daring, his initial visit may still simply be out of curiosity. On his second and third visits, however, he is spurred by concern for his friend, the opium-eater: "The next morning the Drunkard went to look for his friend at the rest-house" (D,62-63) and, discovering the Opium-eater in dire straits, he promises to return and elicit the cure from the guilty ghosts (D,68-70). The opium-eater does not suggest that the drunkard seek a cure; this is the drunkard's own idea.

Other self-motivated characters impelled by personal desires to ameliorate the lives of others include the vulture in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*, the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter*, and Oni in *Oni and the great bird*. All of the characters in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* know that rain will not fall until the gods have been appeased, yet no one wishes to carry the sacrifice to heaven. Finally, acting on his own, without advice or the promise of a reward, the vulture "volunteers" (T,28-29) to go. The vulture knows that he is undertaking "an arduous task" (T,46) and in fact he does lose all of his possessions, including his feathers, in his odyssey.

Acts of supererogation are also performed by the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter* and Oni in *Oni and the great bird*. The queen in *The peasant's wise daughter* is not in any way indebted to the peasant and yet she risks the king's great displeasure and her own social status to help redress an injustice done to him. She acts on the advice of no one. Oni also makes independent decisions. Acting against the advice of both the old man and the king, Oni decides to kill Anodo. He offers his services to the king before he knows that the king has posted a reward for Anodo's annihilator (O,70-72), thus showing that he is motivated by the unselfish desire to contribute positively to society rather than by the wish to acquire a personal fortune.

Finally, as one would expect of self-motivated protagonists, the majority of the protagonists in each group of tales are autodynamic.[1] Table 7 on page

---

[1] The terms "autodynamic" and "heterodynamic" are used by Jack Zipes in *Breaking the magic spell: radical theories of folk and fairy tales*. A character is autodynamic if his fate depends on himself and heterodynamic if he depends on another figure for survival (1979:49).

63 lists only four protagonists who are heterodynamic, and of that number, only one (Briar-rose) is a hero. Briar-rose's destiny is completely out of her control. Her fate is predetermined from the moment she is cursed in her infancy by the thirteenth wise woman. She is completely powerless to change the course of the first 115 years of her life, being "magically" compelled, at 15 years of age, to prick her finger on a spindle and fall asleep for 100 years. Neither is her rescuer, the prince, the master of his own fate. Although he displays bravery and perseverance in his determination to seek out Briar-rose regardless of the consequences, he realizes his goal not because he overcomes the curse, but rather because the curse has expired:

> But by this time the hundred years had just passed, and the day had come when Briar-rose was to awake again. When the King's son came near to the thorn-hedge, it was nothing but large and beautiful flowers, which parted from each other of their own accord, and let him pass unhurt, then they closed again behind him like a hedge (L,81-86).

The prince does not conquer the hedge; it simply parts for him because it is time for Briar-rose to awaken. Thus, although it is to his credit that it is he, and not someone else at that time, who succeeds in reaching Briar-rose, his qualities alone are not responsible for his success.

The other three heterodynamic protagonists rely on autodynamic heroes for deliverance from their difficulties: the inn-keeper depends upon his daughter to iron out his affairs and free him from slavery; the opium-eater can only be cured after the drunkard has procured the necessary knowledge from the ghosts; and the cricket pays his debt of 1400 cowries with money donated by his king.

The autodynamic protagonists set and accomplish their own goals independently. They do not rely on magic, divine intervention, other characters, or luck. They are masters of their own fates, and are held accountable for their actions, either being rewarded or punished for those deeds.

TABLE 7

TALE TYPE BASED ON TYPE OF PROTAGONIST

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Auto-Dynamic	Hetero-Dynamic	Auto-Dynamic	Hetero-Dynamic	Auto-Dynamic	Hetero-Dynamic
The crow and the wren	The drunkard and the opium-eater	The peasant's wise daughter	Little Briar-rose	Ijapa and the hot water test	1400 cowries
The drunkard and the opium-eater	The seven mendicants	The sole		Oni and the great bird	
The rabbit has a cold		The wolf and the fox		Taking a sacrifice to heaven	
Why the vulture is bald					

The drunkard, Oni, and the vulture in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* all undertake difficult and undesirable tasks. The drunkard obtains the cure for the opium-eater's nose simply by impersonating a ghost and asking for it; Oni defeats Anodo using ordinary weapons available to anyone. Both the drunkard and Oni earn their rewards through their own efforts. The unrewarded vulture similarly perseveres in difficult conditions during his journey to heaven. As well, other characters extract themselves from intolerable situations by using their wits. The rabbit lives, the peasant's wise daughter saves her marriage, the fox escapes from the wolf, and Ijapa evades punishment. They are not rescued by anyone; rather, they create the conditions that liberate them from their difficulties. The rabbit's neutral response to King Lion leaves the king with no choice but to release him; the peasant's wise daughter displays such great patience and love for her husband, despite his treatment of her, that he changes his mind and renews his wedding vows; the fox sets the stage for the wolf's demise by leading him to the cellar, neglecting to enlighten the wolf about his movements, and by jumping around and attracting the attention of the murderous farmer; Ijapa steals his own yams and dupes his judge.

Although Ijapa acts with impunity, the remaining autodynamic protagonists suffer the consequences of their errant behaviour. The crow loses a meal because in his greed, he releases the wren. The vulture in *Why the vulture is bald* and the sole in *The sole* both incur the wrath of others--the former through his insolence in asking to be recognized as king and the latter by spitefully calling the herring "naked" (S,19-21). In both cases the lack of clemency shown them means that as individuals these errant characters are credited with intelligence and a free will. They alone are held responsible for their own misbehaviour. They are thus the architects of their own misfortunes.

It is important to note, then, that although these autodynamic individuals display great independence and actively forge their own destinies, they are not isolated from their societies. Their actions affect others and are observed, and frequently judged, by the larger society, which dispenses rewards and punishments. For the most part, these fictitious societies praise or censure these individuals, either bestowing on them such rewards as wealth, matrimony, freedom, or physically punishing them for their depravity. (There is also, in the Yoruba tale *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*, a recognition that society sometimes errs in bestowing its favours: "Even the most despised are capable of doing good, and they are not always rewarded by their fellow men for their pains" (T,73-74).) Thus, none of the three groups of tales presents an overly-deterministic view of life. However, although these tales appear to value individuals, they do not appear to advocate rampant individualism, evidenced by the fact that the characters in these tales remain accountable to their societies for their actions.

In conclusion, this chapter shows that the societies portrayed in these tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland share moral values, particularly stressing wisdom, temperance, justice, fortitude, and generosity. One obvious difference, however, is that the Burmese tales more strongly advocate loyalty than do the Euro-Canadian or Yoruba tales. A second major difference appears to be that the societies in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian stories attach a greater importance to physical characteristics and beauty than do the fictitious Yoruba societies. As well, the Yoruba tales seem to hold males in greater esteem than females. Finally, all of the fictitious societies also stress the responsibility that the individual must bear in shaping his own life, while at the same time revealing (through rewards and punishments) that individuals are not isolated from the values and needs of the larger societies in which they live.

CHAPTER THREE

PLOT

"The plot in a dramatic or narrative work is the structure of its actions, as these are ordered and rendered toward achieving particular emotional and artistic effects."[1] Both traditional and structural schools of thought emphasize that plot is of central importance in the folktale. From the structuralist perspective of Vladimir Propp, actions constitute the fundamental components of a tale (1968:21), and hence the definition of the folktale presented in *Morphology of the folktale* is based on the functions of the dramatis personae: "Morphologically, a tale (*skázka)* may be termed any development proceeding from villainy (A) or a lack (a), through intermediary functions to marriage (W*), or to other functions employed as a dénouement" (1968:92). Similarly, Max Lüthi, in *The European folktale: form and nature*, refers to the folktale as "action-oriented" and leading "its figures on from point to point without pausing to describe anything at length" (1982:24). Lüthi writes:

> Its protagonists are assigned very specific tasks: they are to cure sick princesses, guard magic cows, build a golden bridge or a magnificent garden overnight, or spin a roomful of straw into gold; or they must fetch faraway magic objects, win fights against dragons and giants, defeat an enemy army, ride up a glass mountain, or ride through the air to take a golden apple from the hand of the king's daughter. Whereas the antiheroes regularly fail and often pay with their lives--for the task is usually bound up with extreme forms of reward and punishment, such as the princess and the kingdom or death--the hero succeeds in doing the impossible. . . . subordinate characters, and props also precisely accomplish or fail to accomplish the specific narrative task that is assigned to them. . . . Heinous crimes, fratricide, infanticide, and malicious slander are everyday features of the folktale, as are gruesome methods of punishment (1982:29-35).

---

[1] M.H. Abrams, *A glossary of literary terms*, 127.

The study of plot in the folktale, particularly the tasks and conflicts assigned to and experienced by the protagonists, as well as the outcomes of their adventures, reveal certain preoccupations and themes, recurring problems, and the appropriate means for solving problems in the fictitious societies. Chapter three, the second of three chapters focussing on the cultural content of the selected folktales, concentrates on such aspects of plot as the type of conflict, its source and resolution, and the underlying themes to determine that in the societies portrayed in the three groups of tales conflict is all-pervasive and inevitable, and is expressed in similar ways. The tales from all three cultures thus present a world view in which complexity and conflict are integral aspects of everyday life. Moreover, although the three groups of tales ascribe conflict to different sources and resolve it in different ways, the outcomes of conflict reveal that these tales share a world view which emphasizes the transience of life, the possibility that individuals can transcend the limitations of their material existence, and a strong belief in meritocratic principles which stress that an individual ultimately carves his own niche in society.

TYPE OF CONFLICT

The term conflict denotes "any antagonistic state between two or more parties arising from incompatible interests".[1] In the folktales selected for this study, conflict is ubiquitous, existing on all levels of society and surfacing within the natural world as well. Conflicts occur within and between individuals, within nature, and between society and the environment. These conflicts involve competition for control of territory, resources, and positions of power, as well as disagreements about values and norms, and they surface in the following forms: litigation, warfare, verbal and physical abuse, magic, theft, competitions, and fights. All of these folktales, then, present conflict as being integral to life.

---

[1] Klaus-Friedrich Koch, "Conflict" in *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, c1976, 88.

Table 8 on page 69 divides the folktales of each culture into three categories based on the most prevalent type of conflict: societal (between individuals or groups of individuals), environmental (between individuals and nature), and personal (within individuals).[1] Because many of the tales contain more than one type of conflict, the placement of the tales into these categories is based on the type of conflict characterizing the main task undertaken by the protagonist.

Table 8 shows a noticeable difference between the three groups of tales with respect to type of conflict. All of the Burmese and most of the Euro-Canadian tales have been listed under the "Societal" category. In contrast, one half of the Yoruba tales fall into the "Societal" category and the other half are classed as "Environmental". Thus, whereas the most important issues facing the fictitious Burmese and Euro-Canadian societies originate within society itself, half of the major problems encountered by the fictitious Yoruba societies are caused by hostile environments, forcing those societies to focus equally on environmental and societal problems.

---

[1] Although these particular terms (societal, environmental, personal) have been coined by the researcher, similar categorization devices have been used many times. In *A glossary of literary terms* M.H. Abrams writes that "in addition to the conflict between individuals, there may be the conflict of a protagonist against fate, or against the circumstances that stand between him and a goal he has set himself; and in some works, the conflict is between opposing desires or values in a character's own mind" (1971:128).

TABLE 8

TYPE OF CONFLICT

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Societal	Environ-mental	Per-sonal	Societal	Environ-mental	Per-sonal	Societal	Environ-mental	Per-sonal
The crow and the wren			The louse and the flea		Little Briar-rose	1400 cowries	Oni and the great bird	
The drunkard and the opium-eater			The peasant's wise daughter			Ijapa and the hot water test	Taking a sacrifice to heaven	
The rabbit has a cold			The sole					
The seven mendicants			The wolf and the fox					
Why the vulture is bald								

All five of the Burmese tales, four of the five Euro-Canadian tales, and two Yoruba tales have been placed in the "Societal" category. Although other types of conflict may occur in these tales, the major task or goal of the protagonist places him in direct conflict with other individuals over such internal societal issues as the establishment of order within society, the distribution of societal rewards and punishments, the maintenance of good relations between citizens, and the responsibilities, rights, and possible achievements of the individual within society. The prevalence of conflict within these fictitious communities suggests that disorder is a natural state and that societal order is a cultural, rather than a natural, phenomenon. Therefore, according to these tales, order is not intrinsic, but rather is introduced to society through conflict. Moreover, as the protagonists of these tales encounter and resolve their conflicts with other members of society, it becomes clear that in these tales the individual is vital to the creation and sustenance of the collective values which are essential to the establishment of order in society.

The breakdown of good relations between individuals often occurs when one character attempts to wield power over others. In four of the eleven tales dominated by societal conflict, the antagonist maliciously tyrannizes other characters by subjecting them to unprovoked attacks which are completely unjustifiable in moral terms. These antagonists are simply unable to coexist peacefully with others. In *The crow and the wren* from Burma, the crow and the wren conflict over the fate of the wren and of her daughter. The crow, because he is larger and more powerful, intends to murder and consume first the wren and then her daughter. The wren, of course, wishes to prevent such a catastrophe. Similarly, in *The rabbit has a cold* the rabbit's life is at stake when he finds himself pitted against the very powerful and hungry lion in a verbal duel which has already claimed the lives of two of the rabbit's colleagues, the bear and the monkey. In Canada's *The wolf and the fox* the wolf antagonizes the fox by threatening to kill him unless he concedes to the wolf's demands: "'Red-fox, get me something to eat, or else I will eat you yourself'" (WF,5-6). Their relationship is that of an extortionist and his victim.

The wolf uses coercion to ensure the fox's compliance, causing much ill will on the part of the fox: "The wolf had the fox with him, and whatsoever the wolf wished, that the fox was compelled to do, for he was the weaker, and he would gladly have been rid of his master" (WF,1-3).

Whereas the crow, the lion, and the wolf all desire complete control over other characters, the ghosts in Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater* are guilty of xenophobia and territoriality. They are unable to abide the presence of humans in the guest-house they have expropriated. When the opium-eater and the drunkard enter that dwelling, seeking the whereabouts of treasure as well as esoteric medical knowledge possessed only by the ghosts, they find themselves endangered by the phantoms. Although the drunkard emerges unscathed from his encounter with the ghosts, the opium-eater is less fortunate and suffers a disfigured face, which becomes a source of amusement for unsympathetic witnesses. The drunkard and opium-eater are outcasts of their society (D,2) and, far from commiserating over the opium-eater's misfortune, the villagers mock him: "As the two friends walked through the village, all the villagers roared with laughter to see the three-yard long nose of the Opium-eater" (D,65-68). Thus, in this tale conflict permeates the whole human society as well.

Similarly, in *The peasant's wise daughter* clashes between individuals occur on all levels of society, from the king down to the lowliest peasant. On more than one occasion, the protagonist, the peasant's daughter, finds herself in opposition to her liege and husband, the king. The king poses her a riddle which she must solve if she is to become queen; as queen, she takes the opposing view when the king foolishly awards a foal to the owner of oxen; as the king's wife, she placates her husband, who, angered by her apparent disloyalty, banishes her from the court. In addition, the king subjects other peasants to imprisonment and torture in order to elicit information from them. He incarcerates the queen's father on the suspicion of withholding a golden pestle, and has another peasant tortured until he reveals that he has received assistance from the queen. Even the relationship between two peasants is sullied by a disagreement over the ownership of a new foal.

Interpersonal relations are also strained in Burma's *The seven mendicants*. In this tale a conflict over the possession of 600 silver pieces ensues between the inn-keeper and the six mendicants after the seventh mendicant disappears with that sum of money. The inn-keeper's daughter eventually formalizes this conflict by claiming in a court of law that the mendicants are not entitled to receive the silver unless the bailors, as well as the bailee, conform to all the stipulations of the bailment.

Formalized conflict also occurs in other tales when societal members struggle to impose order in the community. In Yorubaland's *Ijapa and the hot water test* the chief presides over a trial to determine the veracity of the accusation that Ijapa has stolen his yams. In Canada's *The sole* the society organizes a competition to choose a new leader who is to bring harmony to a community rife with discord and confusion:

> The fishes had for a long time been discontented because no order prevailed in their kingdom. None of them turned aside for the others, but all swam to the right or the left as they fancied, or darted between those who wanted to stay together, or got into their way; and a strong one gave a weak one a blow with its tail, which drove it away, or else swallowed it up without more ado. . . . and they met together to choose for their ruler the one who could cleave through the water most quickly, and give help to the weak ones (S,1-10).

The fish, including the sole, enter a race and compete for the position of king. Finally, after the sole has lost the race to the herring, he clashes with that character because, unable to conceal his jealousy, the sole calls the herring "naked" (S,19).

Power and prestige are also a source of contention in Burma's *Why the vulture is bald*. Conflict between the vulture and his community results when the vulture aspires to a position of power which the community is unwilling to grant him: "He became more and more proud until he asked the birds to recognize him as their king. At this insolence, the birds pecked off, not only the feathers that they had given the Vulture, but also the Vulture's own feathers" (W,15-19).

The main problem in *1400 cowries* is a migrant debt that originates with the cricket and is subsequently transferred to all other characters making an appearance in the tale. This is once again a societal, rather than an environmental, problem. The initial problem exists between the cricket and his prospective father-in-law. The cricket has no money to pay the dowry to which the bride's father is entitled. This is resolved when the cricket borrows money from the palm wine seller. A new conflict arises between the cricket and the moneylender when the cricket increases his debt by spending the money on palm wine. Then the debt is transferred between the cricket and the cotton tree, the cotton tree and the roan, the roan and the hunter, and so on, until the king finally steps in and pays the debt. In this tale, interaction means conflict. Each character accuses each subsequently encountered character of causing injury to his person and demands 1400 cowries in compensation. For instance, after the cricket is pricked by a thorn from the cotton tree against which he is leaning, he cries:

> 'O cotton tree, O cotton tree--there is trouble:
> For you see, your thorns have pricked my poor body.
> The cricket who owes the palm wine man is your brother,
> Fourteen hundred cowries is the debt you owe to me,
> The gods will be angry if you do not pay up' (C,10-14).

The cotton tree then encounters a roan, who offends him:

> 'Beautiful roan, beautiful roan, you are in trouble,
> You have eaten my leaves as they bent in the breeze.
> Cricket's body was wounded by cotton tree's thorns,
> The cricket who owes the palm wine seller the cowries.
> Fourteen hundred of these you must pay unto me,
> The gods will be angry if you do not pay up' (C,18-23).

The roan is subsequently wounded by a hunter, who acquires and passes on the debt to a stump he trips over; an old woman takes on the debt after offending the stump and then passes it on to a hen who pecks her foot. From the hen, the debt travels to a hawk who has stolen a chick, to a woman who steals a hawk feather, to a drummer who beats the woman, to the prince who beats the drummer, and finally to the king, at whose feet the prince places the whole problem. Thus, throughout this story, each character's relationship with the other characters is one of conflict. In contrast, in the Euro-Canadian cumulative tale, *The louse and the flea*, the characters appear to enjoy a harmonious existence until an excess of commiseration leads to the destruction of all characters when the spring overflows. The spring's existence is thus incompatible with the survival of the other characters.

Although the major conflicts in these tales are societal in origin, there is also evidence of other kinds of conflict. When the collectivities of animals in these tales are interpreted as representing not only human society, but the natural order as well, it becomes clear that conflict also permeates nature. This further illustrates the dominant view in these tales that conflict is a natural phenomenon which serves to structure the relationships between disparate groups.

The crow and the wren, *The rabbit has a cold*, and *Why the vulture is bald* all show conflicts occurring within nature. The crow's prey is a smaller bird, the wren. The crow is also burned by a natural element, fire. In *The rabbit has a cold* the larger carnivore, the lion, wishes to eat the smaller herbivore, the rabbit, and in *Why the vulture is bald* the community of birds attacks another bird, the vulture. Of the Euro-Canadian tales, *The sole* and *The wolf and the fox* also portray this type of conflict. Dissension between fish exists within the disordered society described in *The sole* and, more specifically, between the sole and the herring in the same tale. Opposing animals can also be observed in *The wolf and the fox*, where no love is lost between the wolf and the fox. Conflict within nature also occurs in such Yoruba tales as *1400 cowries*, *Ijapa and the hot water test*, and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. For example, in *1400 cowries* a roan damages a cotton tree by consuming its leaves and a hawk steals a chick from a hen. Ijapa victimizes his animal companions by implicating them in the theft of the chief's yams and the vulture in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* is an outcast in the society of birds.

In addition to conflicts within nature, conflicts between man and nature occur in the following Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales: *The wolf and the fox*, *Little Briar-rose*, *The Louse and the flea*, *1400 cowries*, *Ijapa and the hot water test*. Environmental conflicts occur in *The wolf and the fox* each time the animal characters steal from the human farmers. And in the end, man vanquishes nature: the wolf's final confrontation is with a farmer who kills him. The same type of conflict is evident in *Little Briar-rose* where the hedge, acting out a curse, prevents access to the princess:

> from time to time Kings' sons came and tried to get through the thorny hedge into the castle.
>
> But they found it impossible, for the thorns held fast together, as if they had hands, and the youths were caught in them, could not get loose again, and died a miserable death (L,65-69).

In this struggle, however, nature prevails, as it does in *The louse and the flea* where fire and water begin and end the incidents leading to the general destruction.

In *1400 cowries* humans frequently clash with nature: the hunter wounds the roan, the hunter trips over the tree stump, the old woman picks a mushroom, the hen pecks the old woman, the woman with the baby "steals" the hawk's feather. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* man loses the contest with nature when Ijapa the tortoise outsmarts the human chief. However, other animals in this tale (the frog, the leopard, the bush rat, the goat) are not as fortunate as Ijapa: they suffer at the chief's hands when they are forced to drink the water just after it has boiled (I,78-87). In these instances, man punishes nature.

Two of the Yoruba tales are classed in the "Environmental" category because they portray societies facing major environmental threats which could result in the extermination of the human component of the ecological system. In *Oni and the great bird* the town of Ajo is terrorized by the presence of a giant eagle, Anodo, who appears at dusk every evening and preys upon any humans unfortunate or foolish enough not to have taken refuge indoors. It is Oni's task to overpower nature so that human society might survive and flourish in Ajo. In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the society also faces possible annihilation because, thanks to a quarrel between Earth and Heaven, no rain has fallen. Consequently, no crops have grown and the population faces starvation: "There was once a time when no rain fell upon the earth and the crops did not grow" (T,1-2). It is to alleviate this environmental problem that the vulture undertakes his journey to heaven. Thus, both of these protagonists, Oni and the vulture, address environmental concerns.

Although environmental conflict dominates in these two tales, societal conflict is also present. In *Oni and the great bird* Oni has participated in a war against another village. Moreover, he is not only different, but also separated from his fellow men, with whom he lives in conflict. On different occasions they try to kill him, banish him, and steal his hard-earned fortune. Similarly, the hero of *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*, the vulture, is an outcast who is forced to journey to heaven because the other birds refuse to cooperate with the humans in an activity intended to benefit them all. Moreover, upon his return, the vulture is refused hospitality by other members of his society even though he has performed a great service for them.

Finally, there is only one tale in which personal conflict dominates the task undertaken by the protagonist. In Canada's *Little Briar-rose* a societal conflict between the king and the thirteenth wise woman has dire consequences for Briar-rose. Excluded by the king from a feast she had wished to attend, the wise woman vents her wrath on the infant Briar-rose, placing a malicious curse on her. It is Briar-rose's task to prick her finger on a spindle and fall asleep for 100 years. This action forces Briar-rose to confront her destiny. It therefore culminates in her acceptance of her fate, and hence the task is considered to involve a personal, rather than a societal, conflict.

This tale, along with most of the other tales, illustrates well Lüthi's point that "heinous crimes" are commonplace in the folktale. Many characters who are innocent of any crimes are victimized. Little Briar-rose is only a guileless baby when she is cursed because her father has not invited the thirteenth wise woman to the feast. The sins of the father are visited on the offspring: Briar-rose is punished for her father's indiscretion. Similarly, the inn-keeper in *The seven mendicants* pays dearly for a crime he has not committed when he is enslaved because of the youngest mendicant's treachery. In *The rabbit has a cold* the rabbit, whom even King Lion acknowledges to be "wise" (R,33), has presumably exercised that wisdom on the King's behalf. Yet the king himself turns on the rabbit with every intention of killing and eating him. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* Ijapa victimizes innocent workers without a qualm in order to save himself. The flooding spring in *The louse and the flea* kills all the other characters--a perhaps unintended, but certainly lethal, consequence for many innocent individuals. Victimization, violence, cruelty, and ingratitude are thus encountered throughout the tales of these cultures.

In summary, then, in these fictitious societies, conflict, particularly societal conflict, is inevitable, is expressed in similar ways, and is a primary means of imposing order. Thus, these tales present complexity and conflict as integral aspects of existence. Order is a desirable state and is achieved through the efforts of the individual, who creates, preserves, and transmits the values leading to the establishment of order. Interestingly, conflict between man and nature does not occur in the Burmese tales, although it is prevalent in the Yoruba tales, constituting the major conflict in two tales and present in the remaining two tales as well. This type of conflict also occurs in three Euro-Canadian tales. Because its members are not portrayed as being in conflict with nature, the Burmese civilization presented in these folktales appears to be more in tune with its environment than its Euro-Canadian or Yoruba counterparts.

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

This section of chapter three concentrates on the basic processes used to resolve conflict to assess the roles the individual and the collective play in establishing order. Table 9 on page 80 indicates that in these tales the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba conflicts tend to be resolved through tryadic processes. However, this observation does not apply to the Burmese tales. In only one Burmese tale, *The seven mendicants*, do the characters turn to adjudication. All of the other Burmese tales follow a dyadic process to resolve conflict.

Tryadic processes dominate in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. In *Little Briar-rose* the king seeks for Briar-rose a life of happy fulfilment, but the thirteenth wise woman decrees an early death at fifteen years. There is no hope of negotiation between the two parties; a compromise of sorts is reached only when the twelfth wise woman steps in and softens the thirteenth wise woman's curse by changing death to a sleep of 100 years. Moreover, Briar-rose relies on another person, the prince, to rescue her from this fate. In *The wolf and the fox*, although the fox arranges the conditions for the wolf's demise, it is the farmer who, in killing the wolf, actually terminates the parasitic relationship between the wolf and the fox. (Of course, the farmer himself is involved in a conflict with the wolf, but he does benefit from the fox's desire to be rid of the wolf. Hence the process is tryadic.) In *The sole* the disorganized society turns to an impartial test, a competition, to choose a new leader. Furthermore, a higher power intervenes in the conflict between the sole and the herring, punishing the sole for his rude words: "Since that time the sole has been punished by having been given a mouth on one side" (S,20-21).

TABLE 9

BASIC PROCESS IN RESOLVING CONFLICT

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Dyadic	Tryadic	Dyadic	Tryadic	Dyadic	Tryadic
The crow and the wren	The seven mendicants	The peasant's wise daughter	Little Briar-rose		1400 cowries
The drunkard and the opium-eater			The sole		Ijapa and the hot water test
The rabbit has a cold			The wolf and the fox		Oni and the great bird
Why the vulture is bald					Taking a sacrifice to heaven

In *The peasant's wise daughter*, however, the conflicts involving the protagonist (the peasant's daughter) are solved through dyadic processes.

Every time the king, her chief opponent, poses some dilemma, the protagonist herself devises a solution: she alone solves his riddle and shames him with her great love and loyalty. (There are other instances, however, where tryadic processes are evident. The king intervenes in a quarrel between two peasants to award ownership of a new foal to the wrong party. The wronged peasant then appeals to a third party, the queen, who supports his case.) Tryadic processes are thus prevalent in the Euro-Canadian tales.

In the Yoruba tales conflicting sides always require the intervention of a third party to resolve their differences. *1400 cowries* consists of a series of dyadic conflicts which are terminated only when the king steps in with 1400 cowries of his own to pay the debt. The conflict between the chief and Ijapa in *Ijapa and the hot water test* is ended when they turn to a special form of arbitration--an ordeal--to determine once and for all the innocence of Ijapa. In *Oni and the great bird* the village of Ajo is terrorized by the nightly arrival of a malevolent eagle, Anodo. The people are powerless to address the situation until Oni intervenes, taking upon himself the responsibility of destroying Anodo. Oni is thus the third party, his involvement making the resolution a tryadic process. In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the vulture acts as a mediator between earth and heaven, who have been quarrelling over seniority. The vulture is sent to appease the gods with a sacrifice so that they will send rain. In this tale, however, a second conflict between the vulture and his community does not involve a third party and this conflict goes unresolved. This suggests that in the fictitious Yoruba societies individuals are unable to resolve their differences without the intervention of a third pary.

In contrast to the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales, the majority of the Burmese tales are characterized by dyadic resolutions. When the crow and the wren realize that their plans for the wren's future conflict, they strike a bargain in which the wren gains her freedom and loses her daughter to the crow. In *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the drunkard faces a dilemma: he is human, but the ghosts in whose company he finds himself despise humans, and are unlikely to willingly pass on to him the information he needs to cure the opium-eater's nose. Hence the drunkard compromises his identity: he pretends to be a ghost. (The opium-eater, on the other hand, lacks this flexibility, and hence his encounter with the ghosts results in his disfigurement at their hands.) In *The rabbit has a cold* the rabbit faces certain death if he fails to provide a satisfactory answer to the king's question. Knowing that the king will accept neither the truth nor a falsehood, the rabbit produces such a response, claiming that he has a cold and must therefore postpone his answer. Finally, in *Why the vulture is bald* the vulture wants to be coronated. This is contrary to the wish of the community, which simply chastizes him for his impertinence.

The only Burmese tale in which characters turn to adjudication is *The seven mendicants*. In this tale Princess Learned-in-the-Law assumes the role of the adjudicator. She is formally invested with the power to make legal decisions, and once the inn-keeper's daughter involves her in the dispute, the six mendicants have no other choice than to defer to her judgement: "The Mendicants did not believe that she could pay the money, but they had to agree to go before the Princess Learned-in-the-Law on the following day" (SM,55-57).

This reliance of the Burmese tales on dyadic resolutions involving compromise may reveal a greater optimism that individuals themselves can work out their differences and a stronger expectation that interacting individuals will co-operate and compromise with others than is the case with the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba stories. Thus, the Burmese tales stress that the desirable outcome of conflict is not simply order, but also harmony in society. In contrast, because tryadic resolutions dominate in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales, these tales appear to place the onus for conflict resolution more on society than on the individual players. This may disclose a more pessimistic societal view that individuals themselves cannot be expected to successfully resolve their differences with others.

MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

Following the study of processes, the study of conflict management further reveals differences in societal values as portrayed in these folktales. Table 10 on page 84 categorizes the tales from each culture as "violent" (that is, involving physical injury) or "non-violent", according to the manner in which the major conflict is settled. Tales classified as "non-violent" are not necessarily free of violence, although their placement in that category means that the resolution of the major conflict does not involve violence. As Table 10 shows, none of the three groups of tales excludes violence as a viable means of resolving conflict. However, violence is more frequently used in the Euro-Canadian tales than in the Burmese or Yoruba stories. The prevalence of violence in the Euro-Canadian tales tends to result in the domination of one party over another party, whereas the proclivity towards non-violence in the Burmese and Yoruba tales leads to negotiation or compromise.

Nevertheless, violence, or the threat of violence, does occur in the majority of the Burmese tales listed in the "Non-violence" category of Table 10.

TABLE 10

MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Violence	Non-Violence	Violence	Non-Violence	Violence	Non-Violence
The drunkard and the opium-eater	The crow and the wren	Little Briar-rose	The peasant's wise daughter	Oni and the great bird	1400 cowries
Why the vulture is bald	The drunkard and the opium-eater	The louse and the flea			Ijapa and the hot water test
	The rabbit has a cold	The sole			Taking a sacrifice to heaven
	The seven mendicants	The wolf and the fox			

At the beginning of *The crow and the wren* the crow threatens the wren with physical violence: he plans to eat her. This particular conflict is settled with a bargain. In exchange for her freedom, the wren promises to give her daughter to the crow. Thus, although the threat of violence is very real, actual violence is avoided through negotiation. Like the wren, the rabbit in *The rabbit has a cold* faces almost certain death at the hands of a larger character, King Lion. The rabbit's strategy in ending this conflict is to avoid offense by giving the king an evasive answer that is neither the truth nor a lie. Similarly, in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the drunkard is likely facing the same violent treatment as the opium-eater received when he was discovered by the ghosts to be human. The drunkard avoids violence by hiding his identity and pretending to be a ghost.

Violence is absent in only one of the four Burmese tales listed in the "Non-violent" category of Table 10. In *The seven mendicants* the inn-keeper is involved in a dispute over 600 silver pieces. He does not face physical violence, although his status as a free individual is at stake. This conflict is solved through the formal mechanism of the courts. The case is presided over by the Princess Learned-in-the-Law, who returns the following impartial verdict:

> 'In a bailment, both the bailee and the bailor must conform to all the stipulations made at the time of the bailment. In the case before us, the bailee, namely the Inn-Keeper, should not return the six hundred silver pieces until and unless all the seven Mendicants are present to receive the silver. I cannot now give the silver pieces to the Mendicants, as only six are present in court. Accordingly, I order that the money be kept in this court for three months; if at the end of this period, all the Seven Mendicants should come before me they will be given the silver, and if at the end of this period, the Seven Mendicants are unable to come before me, the silver shall be returned to the Inn-Keeper' (SM,67-77).

The Yoruba tales, like the Burmese tales, tend to emphasize compromise and negotiation. Three of the four Yoruba tales studied resolve conflicts through non-violent means. Like the Burmese tales, physical discomfort may be involved, but the conflict itself is ended or settled in a non-violent way. Many of the individual conflicts in *1400 cowries* involve physical injury: the cricket is pricked by a thorn, the cotton tree's leaves are eaten by a passing roan, the roan is wounded by a hunter, the hunter stumbles over a tree stump, the old woman is pecked by a hen, one of the hen's chickens is stolen by a hawk, the king's drummer beats the woman and, in turn, is beaten by the prince. However, the conflicts are settled by the sober intervention of the king, who supplies the necessary funds to relieve his subjects of their debt. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* the chief and Ijapa resolve their disagreement by turning to trial by ordeal. This is meant to be a civilised solution, and thanks to Ijapa's ingenuity, no physical harm is suffered by either the chief or Ijapa. Ironically, however, other innocent characters do suffer bodily harm when they receive burns from the boiling water they have been forced to drink. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that either the chief or Ijapa subject the other to violence while resolving their differences.

In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the vulture claims that a state of war exists between Earth and Heaven:

> 'Oh what a war now exists,
> A serious war it is indeed,
> When the Earth and Heavens quarrel. . . .
> Heaven claims seniority
> Over Earth--Earth over Heaven' (T,36-42).

This conflict is exacerbated by the drought which prevents new growth on the earth's surface and is settled through the vulture's mediation in presenting the sacrifice to the gods. This is once more a non-violent solution.

The Burmese and Yoruba tales do contain examples of violent solutions. In the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* a state of violence is terminated through violence. Oni removes the threat of Anodo by destroying Anodo. There is no compromise, no mediation, no negotiation, simply death for the terrorist. Two Burmese tales have also been listed in the "Violence" category of Table 10. In *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the ghosts react to the human trespasser (the opium-eater) by physically abusing him: "When they saw that he was a human being, they pulled his nose until it became full three yards long" (D,58-60). Finally, in *Why the vulture is bald* the vulture's request to be king carries no obvious threat of physical injury to the community of birds. Nevertheless, they are so greatly offended that they respond with violence, pecking away the vulture's feathers.

In contrast to the Burmese and Yoruba tales, Euro-Canadian solutions are dominated by violence. In *Little Briar-rose* the thirteenth wise woman responds to a perceived insult by physically harming the king's young daughter, Briar-rose. Even though the twelfth wise woman softens the curse by exchanging death with a sleep of 100 years, Briar-rose's physical existence is compromised. Interestingly, even the softened curse involves a physical solution. With what can only be described as a "rousing kiss", the prince causes Briar-rose to awaken 100 years after she has pricked her finger on a spindle.

In *The sole* the community turns to a competition involving physical prowess to solve the problem of choosing a new leader who will impose order on the community. When the sole voices an insult, corporal punishment results. For his unkind words the sole is given a mouth on one side. In *The wolf and the fox* each encounter between the wolf and the humans ends in a beating for the wolf. The last fatal beating finally ends his conflict with the fox and with the humans. The parasitic relationship between them is terminated not through reasoning, avoidance, or negotiation, but through the physical elimination of the wolf. Similarly, the situation described in *The* *louse and the flea* is brought to a halt only when all of the characters expire in the flood.

The only Euro-Canadian tale which does not rely on violence to resolve difficulties is *The peasant's wise daughter*. In this tale there is plenty of violence: the king does not seem to think twice about imprisoning or torturing uncooperative peasants. However, in the conflicts with his wife, violence does not dominate. It is in acquiesing to the king's decree that she be banished that the queen shows the king her loyalty and love, thus persuading him to change his mind and renew, rather than renounce, his marriage vows.

In summary, this section of chapter three reveals that the Euro-Canadian tales more frequently resolve conflicts with violence than do the Burmese or Yoruba tales. This suggests that negotiation and compromise are less common in and thus perhaps less important to the fictitious Euro-Canadian societies.

OUTCOMES OF CONFLICT

None of the major conflicts in these tales occur between equals. One side is always larger, more numerous, stronger, smarter, more virtuous, or more powerful than its opposing side. Inequality both causes and resolves conflict. In two Burmese tales, *The crow and the wren* and *The rabbit has a cold*, the anti-heroes, the crow and King Lion, are larger and more powerful than their opponents, the wren and the rabbit. The wolf is larger than the fox in Canada's *The wolf and the fox*, and Oni faces a very large and powerful opponent, Anodo, in Yorubaland's *Oni and the great bird*. The inn-keeper in

The seven mendicants, the vulture in *Why the vulture is bald*, and the drunkard in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* all stand alone against a formidable group of opponents. The drunkard's antagonists, the ghosts, are further empowered by their knowledge of magic, as is Briar-rose's nemesis, the thirteenth wise woman. The peasant's daughter takes on the monarchy in *The peasant's wise daughter*, as does Ijapa in *Ijapa and the hot water test*. The sole competes with fishes of all sizes and incurs the wrath of a higher power in *The sole*. In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the vulture stands alone against his community and braves the elements to carry a sacrifice to the gods. Yet in most of these tales, as Table 11 on page 90 shows, the weaker character overcomes the odds, reverses his situation, and triumphs over the intimidating opponent.

Table 11 illustrates that in almost all of the tales the protagonist experiences a reversal of his situation. In the majority of each culture's tales (4 of 5 Burmese tales, 3 of 5 Euro-Canadian tales, and 3 of 4 Yoruba tales) the underdog prevails in the end. Thus, these tales emphasize the impermanence of situations in life and project an optimistic view that the weak can overcome their limitations. Because individuals are rewarded for their achievments and punished for their defects, these tales also seem to stress meritocratic practices.

In some tales the protagonist risks the loss of life or limb. He is threatened, seemingly defeated, and yet finds a way out of his difficulties. In *The crow and the wren*, for instance, the larger crow holds the smaller wren captive, planning to eat her for dinner. In the end the wren reverses the situation, having gained her own and her daughter's freedom and leaving the crow empty-handed. The drunkard of *The drunkard and the opium-eater* goes from a homeless outcast to a wealthy homeowner living a life of luxury. He lacks both the knowledge and the power of the ghosts. Yet he triumphs over the suspicious ghosts, eliciting from them the information he seeks. In *The rabbit has a cold* the rabbit goes from a negative situation in which his life is imperiled by the carnivorous lion to a more positive situation where he gains his freedom from that individual. The dominated fox in the Euro-Canadian *The wolf and the fox* turns the tables on the dominant wolf by tempting the wolf to eat too much. Consequently, the wolf dies and the fox lives freely.

TABLE 11

TALES IN WHICH REVERSALS OCCUR

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Reversal	No Reversal	Reversal	No Reversal	Reversal	No Reversal
The crow and the wren		Little Briar-rose		1400 cowries	Taking a sacrifice to heaven
The drunkard and the opium-eater		The louse and the flea		Ijapa and the hot water test	
The rabbit has a cold		The peasant's wise daughter		Oni and the great bird	
The seven mendicants		The sole			
Why the vulture is bald		The wolf and the fox			

Other protagonists have less at stake because they do not risk death or injury. Nevertheless, they manage to extricate themselves from very tight corners. In the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* Ijapa turns negative situations into positive opportunities for self-promotion. Faced with an empty storehouse and the prospect of working for the chief, Ijapa ends up with a full storehouse and a pliant chief doing his bidding. In the beginning, the chief sets the conditions for Ijapa's trial, telling Ijapa: "'suspicion falls on you. If you are innocent, we shall discover it. Let us prepare for the hot-water test. Tomorrow the people will assemble. We shall come to the truth of the matter'" (I,53-56). By the end of the trial, however, the chief complies with Ijapa's demands. Ijapa commands the chief to try several others concurrently (I,67-70), to allow him to drink last (I,76-78), to procure for him a larger bowl (I,94-96)--and the chief complies with these demands. Accused--and guilty--of theft, Ijapa is in the end proclaimed innocent of the charge. The peasant's daughter in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* also undergoes a change in her material comfort. She begins as a landless peasant and becomes queen. Having angered her husband, she is banished from the court, but in the end she and the king renew their marriage vows and she is welcome there once again.

Certain characters undertake seemingly impossible tasks where the odds against them seem insurmountable. This is true of the drunkard, who, having entered the ghosts' territory, seems almost certain to be discovered and punished. Yet he remains hidden and gains seven pots of gold. In Yorubaland's *Oni and the great bird* small Oni annihilates great Anodo. The drunkard and Oni therefore reverse their own situations. Other characters facing apparently hopeless circumstances find those circumstances reversed through the intervention of other characters. In Burma's *The seven mendicants* there seems no end to the inn-keeper's slavery. Yet because his daughter intervenes, the inn-keeper gains freedom. In Canada's *Little Briar-rose* Briar-rose's negative destiny, where first she is doomed to die at fifteen years, becomes positive, first through the twelfth wise woman's softening of the curse, and then through the prince's kiss which awakens her and allows her to live happily ever after. In the Yoruba *1400 cowries* the drunken cricket's debt is paid by the king, an altruistic act which allows the sober cricket to conclude the business pursuant to his marriage by paying the dowry money to his future father-in-law.

There are also protagonists who experience negative reversals, usually because their characters are flawed. The vulture in *Why the vulture is bald* begins as a passably good-looking and humble bird, capable of moving his fellow birds to acts of compassion. In the end, because of his great arrogance, he is reduced by those birds to being ugly and sour. The sole in *The sole* begins as a contender for the crown, and thanks to his jealousy, ends up being punished for insulting the victor. These two characters are punished for their faults. The same is not true, however, in *The louse and the flea*, where all of the characters drown in the floodwaters of the spring. These characters have their fortunes negatively reversed through no obvious fault of their own.

The one tale in which the protagonist experiences no reversal of his situation is the Yoruba tale *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. Although the vulture manages to reverse the fate of the community by carrying the sacrifice which persuades the gods to send rain, his own destiny remains unchanged. He begins as an outcast: "At last the vulture, whom everybody despised, volunteered to carry the sacrifice" (T,28-29). He ends as an outcast: "The vulture has remained an outcast amongst the birds from that day to this" (T,67-68). This tale demonstrates, then, that rewards for good deeds are not always forthcoming.

In conclusion, this chapter shows that in the societies portrayed in the tales told in Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland, conflict is omnipresent and thus inevitable. It takes similar forms in all of these fictitious societies, being expressed in litigation, warfare, verbal and physical abuse, magic, competitions, theft, and fights. Violence is commonplace. Thus, all of the tales present conflict as a means of rectifying disorder. Order is desirable and is achieved through the individual, who creates and sustains values which, when held in common, permit order to be established. However, the tales from these three cultures ascribe conflict to different sources. In the Yoruba tales the environment constitutes a major threat to societal security, and hence a significant number of the heroes devote themselves to quelling the forces of nature. This contrasts sharply with the fictitious Burmese societies which, in these tales, enjoy conflict-free relationships with their environments.

A second major difference in the fictitious societies is evident in the ways in which conflict is resolved. The Burmese tales in particular (because their resolutions are dyadic as well as non-violent), but also the Yoruba tales, stress compromise and negotiation to a greater extent than do the Euro-Canadian tales, in which tryadic resolutions dominated by violence allow one party to completely control an opposing party. Thus, the ability to address conflict with flexibility and the willingness to compromise appears to be more important in the fictitious Burmese societies than in the fictitious Yoruba or

Euro-Canadian societies. As well, the frequent use, in the Burmese tales, of dyadic processes to resolve conflict suggests that in the fictitious Burmese societies interacting individuals have a greater responsibility to resolve their differences than is the case in the corresponding Euro-Canadian and Yoruba societies.

Finally, the great number of reversals of situation experienced by the protagonists of these tales reveals three common themes in the fictitious societies: life, and hence also misfortune, is transitory; individuals are well capable of transcending their limitations and hence possess the ability to uproot misery; and most frequently, although sometimes belatedly, individuals receive their due in life.

CHAPTER FOUR

SETTING

"The setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale and the historical time in which its action occurs; the setting of an episode or scene within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place."[1] However, in his discussion of folktale setting, Max Lüthi, an influential scholar of the folktale, broadens the concept to include, not just time and place, but also individuals, as part of the backdrop against which the main characters act. He writes in *The European folktale: form and nature* that the folktale "does not let us experience its setting. Forests, springs, castles, cottages, parents, children, and brothers and sisters are mentioned only if the plot is dependent upon them; they do not serve to establish a setting" (1982:38). This lack of setting is, he argues, characteristic of the folktale because the characters are isolated and therefore are not bound by ties to people or places; nor do they feel the constraints of time:

> Folktales tell us nothing about the town or village where the hero has grown up. On the contrary, they prefer to show him at the very moment when he leaves home and sets out into the world. If he ever returns to his point of departure, he does so only because the plot calls for it, not because he is bound to this place by psychological or physical necessity. The folktale finds a thousand reasons to have its hero set forth from home--his parents' need, his own poverty, his stepmother's malice, a task set by the king, his love of adventure, any kind of errand, or a contest. Any motive is suitable that will isolate the hero and turn him into a wanderer. . . . the depthless world of the folktale also lacks the dimension of time. There do exist young and old people, of course: princes and kings, daughters and mothers, younger and older brothers and sisters, and young and old dwarves, witches, and otherworld animals. But there are no aging persons, and no aging otherworld beings either. Kings, princes, and servants may be changed into animals, plants, or stones for any length of time, and when they are released from their spell they are just as old or young as at the moment when they were bewitched (1982:16-19).

---

[1] M.H. Abrams, *A glossary of literary terms*, 157.

Supporting Lüthi's observation that characters of the folktale are isolated, Vladimir Propp contends in *Morphology of the folktale* that "wandering" is one of the basic elements of tale composition (1968:107). Propp labels his eleventh function "departure" (1968:39), and he remarks that "generally the object of [the hero's] search is located in 'another' or 'different' kingdom" (1968:50). The hero's exit from home thus effectively eliminates the need to describe his home setting.

Lüthi's observation that folktale settings are not well-established also applies to these folktales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland because, for the most part, they occur in unspecified locations at unspecified times in the past. Nevertheless, a close examination of the text reveals the presence of details that shed light on many aspects of the societies in which these characters function. Chapter four, the third of three chapters directed at cultural content, compares the societies, their institutions, and their ecology by examining in each tale the economic, political, and judicial climate; stratification and mobility; views of religion, the family, gender, age, and nature. This chapter determines that although the fictitious societies are organized along similar lines, cultural attitudes differ with respect to religion, gender, and age. Religion, masculinity, and seniority are emphasized to a greater extent in the Yoruba tales than in either of the Burmese or Euro-Canadian groups of tales. As well, although all three groups of tales recognize an interdependence between humanity and nature, the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales present much more negative views of the environment, and their characters more frequently clash with it, than is the case in the Burmese tales.

PHYSICAL SETTING

Not one of the tales included in this study occurs in any particular historical era. Such phrases as "there was once" or "one day" are repeatedly used to establish that the narrated events occurred in the past, although no attempt is made in any of the stories to specifically date these events. In like manner, in only one of the tales is a specific location named. The Yoruba tale *Oni and the great bird* is set in the village of Ajo (O,37). All of the other tales occur in anonymous forests, kingdoms, villages.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

The societies described in these tales are stratified and hierarchical. Many of the tales from each culture mention royalty and are, in fact, kingdoms. This is true of such Burmese tales as *The rabbit has a cold, The seven mendicants*, and *Why the vulture is bald.* Of the Euro-Canadian tales, there are well-established kingdoms in *Little Briar-rose* and *The peasant's wise daughter*, and *The sole* describes the coronation of a new king. The kingdoms in the Yoruba tales occur in *1400 cowries* and *Oni and the great bird,* and there is a chiefdom in *Ijapa and the hot water test.* Table 12 on page 98 shows that these tales tend to portray royalty with a mixture of good and bad qualities, although one tale from each culture presents an idealized picture of the monarchy.

In all of the tales where royalty appears the monarchs are shown to wield much power over, and to command the respect of, their subjects. These monarchs have important roles to play in the distribution of wealth and the provision of justice. Their positions, while elevated, are not isolated from the general populace and in many cases even the lowliest peasants have access to them. However, with the exception of three tales (*The seven mendicants, The sole, 1400 cowries*), the monarchs are also shown to have faults and to make errors.

TABLE 12

PORTRAYALS OF ROYALTY

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed
The seven mendicants		The rabbit has a cold Why the vulture is bald	The sole		Little Briar-rose The peasant's wise daughter	1400 cowries		Ijapa and the hot water test Oni and the great bird

Without exception, all of the monarchs in these tales are addressed very respectfully by their subjects. In the Burmese tale *The rabbit has a cold* all of the king's ministers address the tyrant with the title "Your majesty". The rabbit even goes so far as to apologize for having a cold and politely seeks permission to remove himself from the king's presence: "'I am sorry, Your Majesty,' replied the Rabbit, 'I have a cold and my nose is blocked. May I go home and rest until my cold is cured, for only then shall I be able to use my nose and say what sort of smell issues from the royal mouth?'" (R,35-39). In

Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* the queen addresses the king as "my dear husband" (P,93-94) and "My dear lord and King" (P,106) even after he has ill-treated her, and the Yoruba trickster, Ijapa, is always overtly deferential to the chief, calling him "great chief" (I,40,97) and "sir" (I,47,65).

These monarchs have all been invested with economic and judicial power. They not only provide employment, but also, through their judgements in disputes, effect the redistribution of wealth in their kingdoms. Kings' servants and advisors appear in *The rabbit has a cold, 1400 cowries, Ijapa and the hot water test*, and in *Oni and the great bird*. Furthermore, Burma's Princess Learned-in-the-Law awards 600 silver pieces to the inn-keeper (SM,78-82), and the king in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* presents peasants with land (P,4-5) and livestock (P,61-63). The Yoruba kings in *1400 cowries* and *Oni and the great bird* give their personal possessions to others--the former 1400 cowries from his own treasury and the latter one-half kingdom to the killer of Anodo.

In addition to the influence they carry in economic matters, royal figures hold much sway in the justice system, where they display varying degrees of competence. The most idealistic view of the role the monarchy should play in furthering the cause of justice occurs in Canada's *The sole*: "they met together to choose for their ruler the one who could cleave through the water most quickly, and give help to the weak ones" (S,8-10). Two royal figures who actually achieve this goal appear in Burma's *The seven mendicants* and *1400 cowries* from Yorubaland. Both Princess Learned-in-the-Law and the cricket's king are swift to produce fair and impartial judgements that ameliorate the living conditions of weaker characters. Princess Learned-in-the-Law frees the inn-keeper from slavery and the king in *1400 cowries* relieves his subjects of their accumulated debt.

In both of these tales it is emphasized that the monarch is merely an instrument of the law, and that as such, he must himself also abide by the law. In her interpretation of the case before her, Princess Learned-in-the-Law stresses that she too is bound by the law:

> 'In a bailment, both the bailee and the bailor must conform to all the stipulations made at the time of the bailment. In the case before us, the bailee, namely the Inn-Keeper, should not return the six hundred silver pieces until and unless all the seven Mendicants are present to receive the silver. I cannot now give the silver pieces to the Mendicants, as only six are present in court' (SM,67-73).

Similarly, the king in *1400 cowries* respects the laws of higher powers. He repeats the same fear expressed by every other affected character: "'The gods will be angry if we do not pay up'" (C,170).

The power held by the Yoruba king and Princess Learned-in-the-Law is thus tempered by their obligation to act within the law. A comparable restraint is also placed on King Lion in Burma's *The rabbit has a cold:* "he had to think of an excuse which would give a semblance of legality to his unjust act" (R,6-7). However, King Lion abdicates his responsibility by executing his ministers on trumped-up charges of treason. Such raw power unaccompanied by wisdom and compassion is also wielded by the king in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter*. He incarcerates peasants at will and is not at all averse to using torture to achieve his ends (P,85-87).

However, aside from their viciousness and folly in unjustly harming innocent individuals, these two monarchs also exhibit positive qualities. At times King Lion produces very insightful remarks. For instance, he recognizes the rabbit's sagacity, calling him "Wise Rabbit" (R,33), and he tells the monkey that "untruthful and flattering counsellors to the king are a danger to the state" (R,30-31). These comments are both apt and true. The peasant girl's king not only recognizes wisdom, but shows that he appreciates it by marrying the peasant's daughter after she has correctly guessed his riddle. Hence these two tales belong in the "Mixed" category of Table 12.

Other tales containing mixed portrayals of royalty include *Why the vulture is bald* (Burma), *Little Briar-rose* (Canada), *Ijapa and the hot water test* (Yorubaland), and *Oni and the great bird* (Yorubaland). Because the text of *Why the vulture is bald* is ambiguous, failing to indicate whether it is the idea of a monarchy that is repulsive or whether the vulture himself in such an exalted position is an objectionable notion, this tale has been placed in the "Mixed" category of Table 12. The other tales have been similarly placed because the monarchs appearing in them possess both admirable qualities and personal foibles which at times preclude the realization of their goals and desires. For instance, the king's desire to ensure a bright future for Briar-rose is admirable, but he fails to achieve this when he carelessly offends one of the wise women. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* the chief fails in his worthy quest for the truth because he is simply not clever enough to see through Ijapa's antics. Furthermore, the king in *Oni and the great bird* possesses a generous nature, but he is not a good judge of character. Not only does he underestimate Oni's ability to complete the task of killing Anodo, but he believes him when one of his hunters falsely claims to have killed the eagle, and hence for a time the wrong party receives the reward (O,158-160).

In summary, then, monarchs in these tales deserve respect and obedience. However, many monarchs are imperfect individuals and hence they do at times perpetrate injustice and cruelty in their economic and judicial roles.

ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

Aside from their political organization, the societies portrayed in these tales have also developed economic institutions. Some tales from each cultural group refer to monetary systems, although the monetary unit varies between the cultures. The fictitious Burmese and Euro-Canadian societies base their monetary systems on precious metals. In *The drunkard and the opium-eater* his discovery of seven pots of gold means a new life of luxury for the drunkard; in *The seven mendicants* the loss of 600 pieces of silver means that the inn-keeper must give up his livelihood and become a slave to the possessors of the money. In the Euro-Canadian tale *The peasant's wise daughter* the peasant and his daughter find a mortar made of pure gold (P,8). In contrast, the Yoruba system is not based on gold or silver. In *1400 cowries* the currency unit is cowry shells (C,5).

Characters earn money in positions created by the monarchy and, in addition, many characters are involved in private enterprise. In Burma's *The seven mendicants* the protagonist runs his own inn (SM,39), peasants in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* sell firewood (P,52-53), one Yoruba character sells palm-wine (C,3-4), and in *1400 cowries* (Yorubaland) and *The seven mendicants* (Burma) two moneylenders make their appearances.

An interesting difference between the moneylenders in the Burmese and Yoruba tales is that the Burmese moneylender practises usury and the Yoruba moneylender does not appear to do so. In *The seven mendicants* it is expressly stated that the inn-keeper's daughter will have to pay interest on the money borrowed: "The Daughter then went with her Mother to the Village Headman and borrowed six hundred silver pieces, on the security that they would become his slaves if the money was not paid back with interest within one year" (SM,57-61). In contrast, in *1400 cowries* the cricket borrows 1400 cowries (C,5) and 1400 cowries is the sum that must be repaid. There is never any mention of any interest payments and each character repeats the cricket's cry: "Fourteen hundred cowries is the debt you owe to me" (C,13).

In all three groups of tales the ownership of property signifies prestige and wealth. In these tales the lack of private property is used to emphasize a character's poverty. For example, in Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the drunkard and the opium-eater have no possessions: "Having no house of their own, they spent their time in the various rest-houses of the village" (D,3-4). The first concrete expenditure of the newly-wealthy drunkard is the purchase of a house: "The Drunkard dug up the seven pots of gold and became very rich. He bought a house, and lived in luxury with his friend the Opium-eater" (D,33-35). When the inn-keeper in *The seven mendicants* loses status, he leaves his property: "Leaving his Inn, he followed the Mendicants to their home" (SM,39). Similarly, in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* the main character is impoverished: "there was once a poor peasant who had no land, but only a small house, and one daughter" (P,1-2). In contrast, high status individuals such as kings and chiefs always have land.

Briar-rose's family owns a kingdom as does the king in *Oni and the great bird*. As well, the chief in *Ijapa and the hot water test* has fields full of yams.

However, while the possession of property is, in all three groups of tales, evidence of prosperity and position, only Euro-Canadian and Yoruba individuals practise agriculture. No Burmese character farms for a living, but Euro-Canadian agriculturalists sow corn in *The peasant's wise daughter* (P,6) and, in *The wolf and the fox*, ward off pesky predators. Similarly, almost all of the Yoruba tales make reference to farming. In *1400 cowries* the old woman raises hens (C,56), in *Ijapa and the hot water test* even the chief has yams to harvest, and in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the major concern of the people is that "the crops did not grow" (T,2).

STATUS AND MOBILITY

Although the societies portrayed in these tales are stratified and hierarchical, mobility (at least for men) is possible. However, more Burmese and Euro-Canadian protagonists effect changes in their status, indicating a higher degree of fluidity than is obvious in the Yoruba tales. Moreover, Table 13 on page 105 indicates that Burmese protagonists tend to be insiders, and that Euro-Canadian and Yoruba protagonists are divided between insiders and outsiders. This may indicate that the fictitious Burmese societies are more closed to outside influence than the fictitious Euro-Canadian and Yoruba societies.

The only outsiders appearing in the Burmese tales are the drunkard and the opium-eater: "Both outcasts of society, they became fast friends" (D,2-3).

All of the other protagonists are insiders. The crow in *The crow and the wren* calls on numerous friends to help him perform his task; the rabbit in *The rabbit has a cold* is very highly placed in his society: he is one of the king's appointed ministers; the inn-keeper in *The seven mendicants* has established his own business; and the vulture in *Why the vulture is bald* is an object of sympathy in the community of birds.

TABLE 13

STATUS OF PROTAGONISTS

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Insider	Outsider	Insider	Outsider	Insider	Outsider
The crow and the wren	The drunkard and the opium-eater	Little Briar-rose	The peasant's wise daughter	1400 cowries	Oni and the great bird
The rabbit has a cold		The sole	The wolf and the fox	Ijapa and the hot water test	Taking a sacrifice to heaven
The seven mendicants					
Why the vulture is bald					

The Euro-Canadian and Yoruba insiders include, from Canada, Briar-rose in *Little Briar-rose* and the sole in *The sole*, and, from Yorubaland, the cricket in *1400 cowries* and Ijapa in *Ijapa and the hot water test*. Briar-rose is the king's only daughter and a much beloved princess (L,32-33). The sole is a contender for the throne: he participates in the race to choose a king. In *1400 cowries* the cricket's debt has ramifications for everyone, indicating that he is not isolated from others. Ijapa has the same responsibilities as everyone else, and therefore he, with many others, is required to work in the chief's fields.

The outsiders in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales appear in *The peasant's wise daughter* and *The wolf and the fox*, and *Oni and the great bird* and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. The indigent peasant and his daughter live in poverty on the fringes of society. They do not even own a piece of land. The fox in *The wolf and the fox* is a loner who directs a number of anti-social exploits at the human community. In *Oni and the great bird* Oni has been banished from his fatherland (O,16-18) and he is completely unfamiliar with the community when he arrives in Ajo and tells an old man: "'Good evening, my friend, my name is Oni. I am a stranger to your town'" (O,27-28). The vulture in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* is regarded by everyone "as a vulgar ne'er-do-well, who [is] very ugly and spen[ds] all his time searching around the village rubbish dumps, or following bush fires" (T,29-32).

A second difference between the three groups of tales is that the majority of the Burmese and Euro-Canadian protagonists undergo changes in their status, and the majority of the Yoruba protagonists do not. Thus, society is less rigid in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales than in the Yoruba tales.

Four of five Burmese protagonists and three of four Euro-Canadian protagonists experience changes in their social and/or economic status. The inn-keeper in *The seven mendicants*, the drunkard in *The drunkard and the opium-eater*, the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter*, and the fox in *The wolf* *and the fox* all manage to climb the socio-economic ladder. The inn-keeper initially loses status in becoming a slave to the six mendicants, but reverses his fortunes later in the story. The drunkard gains a fortune by digging up a treasure--a circumstance that also benefits his good friend the opium-eater. In the Euro-Canadian tales, the peasant's daughter quits a life of poverty when she marries and, as queen, becomes the proprietress of all the royal possessions (P,48-50). Briar-rose also marries at the end of *Little Briar-rose* and the fox in *The wolf and the fox* gains freedom after the wolf dies in the farmer's cellar.

Some of the protagonists lose status. In Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* the rabbit sacrifices his prestigious position in order to save his life: "The Lion had no choice but to let the Rabbit go home and, needless to say, the Rabbit never went near him again" (R,39-41). The vulture in *Why the vulture is bald* seeks to improve his status and instead it suffers: "At this insolence, the birds pecked off, not only the feathers that they had given the Vulture, but also the Vulture's own feathers" (W,17-19). The sole in Canada's *The sole* similarly ends up as a kind of misfit. All of the characters in *The louse and the flea* suffer a loss of status through their elimination.

Unlike the Burmese and Euro-Canadian protagonists, the majority of whom undergo status changes, only one Yoruba protagonist experiences such a change. Oni begins as a landless stranger in Ajo and is eventually rewarded with half a kingdom for killing Anodo. Of the other protagonists, the cricket returns to his original state in *1400 cowries*, Ijapa neither gains nor loses his position, and the conspicuous absence of any alteration in the community's opinion of the vulture is explained in the moral of *Taking a sacrifice to* *heaven:* "Even the most despised are capable of doing good, and they are not always rewarded by their fellow men for their pains" (T,73-74). Mobility is thus much easier in the fictitious Burmese and Euro-Canadian societies than in the fictitious Yoruba societies.

RELIGION AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Both traditionalist and structuralist scholars of the folktale note that religious beliefs may influence, in a rather obscure way, the content of the folktale. Max Lüthi writes in *The fairytale as art form and portrait of man* that "the fairytale differs from the myth in that God and the gods are always peripheral" (1984:13) and that "the religious in the fairytale is only indirectly expressed" (1984:38).[1] In *Morphology of the folktale* Propp remarks that "the tale at its core preserves traces of very ancient paganism, of ancient customs and rituals" (1968:87). He postulates that there may be a natural connection between religion and the tale:

> A way of life and religion die out, while their contents turn into tales. . . tales contain such obvious traces of religious notions that they can be tracked down without the help of a historical study. . . we shall cite a small illustrative parallel between tales and beliefs. The tale evidences three basic forms of Iván's bearers through the air. These are the flying steed, the bird, and the flying boat. But it happens that these forms represent bearers of the souls of the departed, with the horse predominating among agricultural and herding peoples, the eagle prevailing among hunters, and the boat predominant among inhabitants of the seacoast. Frobenius even cites the representation of such a ship for souls (*Seelenschiff)* from Northwest America. Thus one may suppose that one of the basic elements of tale composition, i.e., *wandering*, reflects notions about the wandering of souls in the other world (1968:106-107).

---

[1] The translator of this work has taken liberties with the German term "volksmärchen", which he has translated as "fairytale" (1984:vii). Hence, when the term "fairytale" is used in this work, it is interpreted as "folktale".

Propp suggests that some magical elements may be connected to the religious beliefs held by members of a given tale's source culture. This section of chapter four explores such a connection between the supernatural and the religious in these selected tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland.

The element of magic occurs in at least one tale from each culture. Misanthropic, malevolent ghosts with magical abilities appear at midnight in the Burmese tale *The drunkard and the opium-eater*. In the Euro-Canadian tale *Little Briar-rose* a talking frog appears to predict the birth of Briar-rose (L,3-6). As well, there are twelve wise women who bestow on Briar-rose wealth and beauty and riches, and one who dooms her to an early death.

In none of these Burmese or Euro-Canadian stories is there any overt mention of religion. Nevertheless, religious undertones may be present. For instance, the inn-keeper's opponents in *The seven mendicants* may or may not be mendicant Buddhist monks. The appearance of apparitions in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* may point to a belief in life after death. As another example, parallels can be drawn between Christendom's Last Supper and the king's feast in Canada's *Little Briar-rose*. The king has only twelve golden plates; Christ had only twelve loyal apostles. In both cases the presence of the thirteenth guest is unlucky because the thirteenth causes harm to the guest of honour. Judas betrayed Christ and is held responsible for his death, and the thirteenth wise woman bestows on Briar-rose a death-wish. In both cases the victim transcends death.[1]

---

[1] The use of the number thirteen is frequent in folklore and is associated not only with Christendom, but with other non-Christian beliefs as well, including those of the Hebrews and those expressed in the mythologies of the Egyptians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Norse. Some examples include: Jacob and his

Two Yoruba stories, *Oni and the great bird* and *Ijapa and the hot water test*, also contain elements of magic which in the tales are unassociated with specific religious beliefs. Oni is supernatural. He is immortal and thus immune to enemy arrows (O,7-9). Oni himself expresses confidence in his ability to defeat Anodo because he has "certain powers and juju" (O,75). He possesses magical boots which respond to his orders:

> The king ordered everybody to try and see if they could fit the boot to their feet. Strange to relate, although it looked a perfectly normal boot, nobody could manage to put it on. When they had all tried without success, the boot was placed before the king and Oni stepped forward and said:
>
> 'Boot from Heaven--boot from Heaven,
> Go on to your master's foot.'
>
> Immediately, the boot started to move from before the king and fitted itself on to Oni's foot of its own accord (O,184-192).

It is also noteworthy that the hero of this tale is called "Oni". This name, which belongs to a character who is not formally affiliated with a specific religious body, nevertheless has import for members of the source culture. In reality, this name is part of the title assumed by the Yoruba religious leader, the Oni of Ife. The other tale, *Ijapa and the hot water test*, may also contain vestiges of religious beliefs since the chief relies on trial by ordeal, and the results of such tests are generally regarded as divine judgements.

---

twelve sons, the head and 12 parts of Osiris, Romulus and 12 shepherds, Odysseus and 12 companions, Balder and 12 judges. Moreover, the numinous quality of this number has, in many traditions, had negative aspects: Agamemnon died on the 13th of Gamelion; some Greek dirges were sung on the 13th day after burial (the number also stands for rebirth); Hippodameia's father had killed 13 suitors before Pelops won her; 13 people were present when Loki killed Balder; there are 13 witches in a coven. Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of symbols and imagery* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, c1974), 461. Thus, the noted elements in *Little Brier-rose* may in fact stem from a non-Christian tradition.

Overt references to religion are made in two of the Yoruba tales, *1400 cowries* and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. The two societies portrayed in these tales are polytheistic. Their gods have great power, are easily offended, and are responsive to human petitions. The recurring refrain of *1400 cowries* expresses the fear that "the gods will be angry" (C,14) and the king provides 1400 cowries from his own treasury as security against this contingency. That such a concern is well-founded is evident in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* where the society suffers from a drought caused by angry gods who must be appeased: "There was once a time when no rain fell upon the earth and the crops did not grow. The people accordingly arranged to offer a sacrifice to the gods to persuade them to send down the rain" (T,1-4). And the gods respond favourably to the sacrifice: "Not long after he disappeared from sight, a great wind arose, and then the sky became dark and heavy with rain clouds. Rain began to fall, to the accompaniment of great peals of thunder and flashes of lightning" (T,51-54). Religious beliefs thus occupy a central place in two of the fictitious Yoruba societies. This particular feature is not evident in the corresponding Burmese and Euro-Canadian societies.

THE FAMILY

In his influential work *The European folktale: form and nature* Max Lüthi writes the following:

> the folktale hero is not embedded in a family structure. He separates himself from his parents except insofar as they remain instigators of the plot, and his brothers (or sisters, if there is a heroine) are mere foils. Mothers-in-law are only significant as adversaries. The heroine's children are only introduced if they influence the development of the plot, while the hero's children are scarcely ever mentioned. The hero has no inner or outwardly visible relationship to his family or even to an ethnic community. His bride or spouse is only of interest as the instigator or goal of the plot. . . .

> Among the various characters of the folktale there exist no firm, lasting relations. Parents, brothers and sisters, and subordinate figures who have been rescued all disappear from sight as soon as they have no more bearing on the action. . . .
>
> Furthermore, relationships themselves do not remain intangible. There exist no invisible internal bonds knitting persons together, but rather relationships generally become visible in the form of a gift. The relationship between the hero and a helpful animal is made manifest in the hair, feather, or scale that the animal gives him (1982:17-18).

Lüthi's view would seem to be supported by Vladimir Propp. In *Morphology of the folktale* Propp makes reference to the isolation of the hero, who, he writes, is often without helpers (1968:82). Moreover, existing donors and helpers do not tend to be old friends or close relatives of the hero, but rather are strangers, encountered accidentally (1968:39). Thus, the family does not tend to sustain the hero. In fact, many villains are related to the hero (1968:86). Moreover, in Propp's schema, the final function, the wedding (1968:63), is merely, as Lüthi asserts, the goal or reward of the plot.

However, contrary to what Lüthi and Propp suggest, in these tales firm and lasting bonds between friends and families do seem to exist. The drunkard and the opium-eater, for instance, in the Burmese tale, remain fast friends despite the change in the drunkard's fortune. Furthermore, heroes are imbedded in family structures. Marriage is celebrated in at least one tale from each culture. In *Little Briar-rose* Briar-rose's marriage to her rescuer constitutes the beginning of her happiness: "And then the marriage of the King's son with Briar-rose was celebrated with all splendor, and they lived contented to the end of their days" (L,112-114). In *The seven mendicants* from Burma, the inn-keeper prolongs his term of bondage because his family takes precedence: "the debt remained undischarged, for he incurred much expense when he married, and later when a little daughter was born to his wife" (SM,40-42). In *The peasant's wise daughter* marriage is the reward for the peasant girl's cleverness in guessing the king's riddle, and at no time does she ever revoke her vows. Even after her husband has rejected her, she says: "'I have nothing more precious and dear than yourself'" (P,108). The king, moved by his wife's great loyalty and love, then decides to renew his wedding vows: "Tears rose to the King's eyes and he said: 'Dear wife, you shall be mine and I will be yours,' and he took her back with him to the royal palace and was married again to her, and at the present time they are very likely still living" (P,109-112). As well, in *1400 cowries* from Yorubaland, the cricket also intends to marry and he borrows 1400 cowries to pay the dowry.

For the most part, it is the nuclear family that appears in these fictitious societies, and as Table 14 on page 114 shows, it is portrayed very positively. These quite frequently patriarchal families are characterized by concern for one another, cooperation, and obedience.

The characters in these tales are neither polygamous nor polyandrous. Nuclear families are the norm. In *Oni and the great bird* the old man's people worry about him, but it is unclear whether this is the nuclear or the extended family: "When they reached the old man's house, they found his people waiting anxiously for him at the door" (O,40-41). In only one tale, Canada's *Little Briar-rose*, does a grandfather appear: "[The prince] had heard, too, from his grandfather, that many kings' sons had already come" (L,75-76). In no other case is there any reference to the extended family. Children live with their parents and in one Burmese tale, the lack of supporting relatives is particularly striking. Facing death, the wren in *The crow and the wren* worries about her soon-to-be-orphaned daughter: "'Oh, my little daughter, my little daughter, who will look after you when I am dead?'" (CW,2-4). The wren fails to name a single relative who could be expected to assume responsibility for her child.

TABLE 14

PORTRAYALS OF FAMILY

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed
The crow and the wren			Little Briar-rose			1400 cowries		
The seven mendicants			The peasant's wise daughter			Ijapa and the hot water test		
			The wolf and the fox			Oni and the great bird		

Many of the families appearing in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales are rather patriarchal. However, this is not true of the fictitious Burmese families. The father is conspicuously absent in *The crow and the wren*, and in *The seven mendicants* the inn-keeper, far from directing the actions of his family, is himself the object of his daughter's concern. Moreover, his wife demonstrates that she accepts responsibility for their child by accompanying her when she visits the village headman (P,57-61). In contrast, father figures dominate in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. In *Little Briar-rose* the queen bears the child, but Briar-rose's father is the prevailing influence on the young princess. He organizes the feast, offends the thirteenth wise woman, and tries to protect Briar-rose by ordering the destruction of all spindles in the kingdom. Before she marries, the young peasant girl in *The peasant's wise daughter* lives alone with her father, and after she marries, she obeys the wishes of her husband, even when his desires adversely affect her. She says of her banishment: "'Yes, my dear husband, if you command this, I will do it'" (P,93-94). In *1400 cowries* the prince approaches, not his mother, but his father, with the problem of the debt. In fact, his mother is never mentioned in the story. Finally, Ijapa also controls the actions of his family: "Ijapa took his wife and children to the place where he had hidden the yams" (I,28-29).

That children are desirable in these tales is most eloquently expressed in the king and queen's wish for children in *Little Briar-rose:* "A long time ago there were a King and Queen who said every day: 'Ah, if only we had a child!'" (L,1-2). The king rejoices at the birth of his daughter and attempts (unsuccessfully) to protect her from all malign influences by currying favour with the wise women and by removing potentially harmful spindles from her path. Furthermore, the bonds forged between these parents and their child endure the separation imposed upon them. Not only Briar-rose, but also everyone else, sleeps for 100 years: "the King and Queen who had just come home, and had entered the great hall, began to go to sleep" (L,50-51).

The desire to protect offspring is also shared by the wren in *The crow and the wren*, the ewe in *The wolf and the fox*, and the hen in *1400 cowries*.

The maternal wren mourns not for herself, but for her daughter, when it appears that she herself will die: "The Crow once caught the Wren, and said to her, 'I will eat you now.' The Wren wailed to herself, 'Oh, my little daughter, my little daughter, who will look after you when I am dead?'" (CW,1-4). When the crow comes calling, the wren refuses to deliver her daughter. The other mothers, the ewe and the hen, are unable to save their offspring from predators and can only protest after the fact.

Like the king's family in *Little Briar-rose*, the other families appearing in these tales also enjoy good relations, open communication, and much caring. The physical closeness apparent in *1400 cowries* where the mother carries the child on her back is paralled by mental affinity in many other tales. In Burma's *The seven mendicants* much affection passes between the inn-keeper and his daughter. At one point, the daughter actually appeals to his love when making a request: "'Father, if you love me and trust me, please do not go to work today, and please remain silent when the Six Mendicants come here to look for you.' The Inn-Keeper, acceding to his daughter's request, did not go to work" (SM,47-50). That the affection is not one-sided is evident when the mother and daughter pledge their freedom as security on the loan they obtain from the village headman.

In Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* the daughter similarly enjoys a very good relationship with her father. They appear to be on terms of equality. They work the field together, and the daughter freely expresses her opinions to her father: "'Listen,' said the father to the girl, 'as our lord the King has been so gracious and presented us with the field, we ought to give him this mortar in return for it.' The daughter, however, would not consent to this" (P,8-11). The use of the word "consent" would seem to indicate that the daughter's position is at least one of equality with her father. On the one occasion that the peasant does not listen to his daughter, he laments his mistake, crying "'Ah! if I had but listened to my daughter!'" (P,29-30). Open communication between parents and offspring is also evident in the Yoruba *1400 cowries*. Faced with a situation out of control, the prince approaches his father, who gives serious consideration to the words of his son: "'O son, as you say, this trouble is great'" (C,155).

This section thus discloses that many of these tales' heroes are embedded in family structures. The nuclear family predominates and its members characteristically have great affection for one another. One notable difference between the three groups of tales is that the fictitious Euro-Canadian and Yoruba families are more patriarchal than the fictitious Burmese families. This inattention to females is explored in greater depth in the following section.

FEMALES

Females occur in the majority of the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales, but only in a minority of the Burmese tales. As mentioned in chapter two of this dissertation, the females of the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales do perform important functions, but the Yoruba females do not. Moreover, Table 15 on page 118 shows that females are more negatively portrayed in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales than in the Burmese tales.

Three tales have been placed in the "Positive" category of Table 15. The female figures appearing in these tales assume great responsibility and are proactive and successful in their endeavours. Although the females in all other tales have very limited access to positions of responsibility, the females in *The crow and the wren*, *The seven mendicants*, and *The peasant's wise daughter* are not similarly restricted. The wren is the sole provider for her family, the Princess Learned-in-the-Law is a judge in *The seven mendicants*, and in the same tale the inn-keeper's wife and daughter assume responsibility for family finances when they borrow money from the village headman. The queen in *The peasant's wise daughter* is entrusted with the royal possessions, and although she is not formally invested with judicial powers, she is nevertheless a powerful unofficial influence in legal matters.

TABLE 15

PORTRAYALS OF FEMALES

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed
The crow and the wren			The peasant's wise daughter	The louse and the flea	Little Briar-rose		1400 cowries	Ijapa and the hot water test
The seven mendicants					The wolf and the fox		Taking a sacrifice to heaven	

None of these females shrink from challenges. When the crow comes to collect her daughter, the wren responds by demanding that the crow prove that he deserves such a dish by washing his beak in her presence. Upon hearing her father's explanation for his status as a slave, the inn-keeper's daughter in *The seven mendicants* immediately resolves to rectify the situation. In the same tale, the Princess Learned-in-the-Law never hesitates in providing a judgement on the case before her. Finally, in *The peasant's wise daughter* the peasant girl is quick to accept the king's challenge to solve the riddle, and she later champions the wronged peasant's cause, thereby jeopardizing her own position as the king's consort. Furthermore, all of these women succeed in their endeavours. The wren saves her daughter, the inn-keeper's daughter wins her court case, the peasant's daughter saves her marriage without ever compromising her principles, and Princess Learned-in-the-Law provides a judgement that is respected by the claimants as well as the defendants in the case.

The remaining Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales depict females in a much less positive fashion. In these tales women are at best pliant homebodies whose visions do not extend beyond domestic affairs and, at worst, harbingers of great misfortune. Two Euro-Canadian tales *(The wolf and the fox* and *Little Briar-rose)* as well as one Yoruba tale *(Ijapa and the hot water test)* have been placed in the "Mixed" category of Table 15. In *The wolf and the fox* the two conscientious females (the ewe and the farmer's wife) do, it is true, raise the alarm when the wolf appears. However, these two characters seem to be singularly unobservant. Neither one appears to have noticed her previous loss at the hands of the fox; they are only alerted by the wolf's excessive clumsiness. Moreover, they do not confront the wolf themselves, but instead rely on others: the ewe's bleating attracts the attention of the farmers (WF,11-13) and the farmer's wife calls for help: "[the wolf] made such a great noise that the woman came out, and when she saw the wolf she called the people, who hurried there, and beat him" (WF,28-30). These females are thus industrious and responsible, but also unintelligent and dependent.

Ijapa and the hot water test also contains mixed portrayals of females. That women and girls are called upon to testify at Ijapa's trial may indicate that female opinion has import in matters of morality. However, this impression is somewhat weakened by the appearance in this tale of a female figure whose moral fibre is rather tenuous. Instead of encouraging Ijapa to behave himself, Ijapa's wife joins her husband in his clandestine activities: "That night when darkness came, Ijapa took his wife and children to the place where he had hidden the yams. They went back and forth many times, each carrying as many yams as he could, until the hole was empty" (I,28-31). Nevertheless, she does obey her husband and in the tale there is nothing surprising in the fact that she shows such obedience. This suggests that her obedience to her husband is quite reasonable culturally. Thus, her portrayal in the tale is mixed rather than negative.

Finally, *Little Briar-rose*, which also appears in the "Mixed" category of Table 15, provides varied examples of womanhood. On the one hand are those females harmlessly occupied with domestic tasks. A kitchen maid prepares to pluck a hen (L,90-91), the mother of Briar-rose provides the king with companionship, and Briar-rose herself displays a feminine interest in spinning. It is interesting that Briar-rose has a reputation for wisdom (L,32) because she never exercises that quality in this story. Unlike the peasant's wise daughter or Princess Learned-in-the-Law, Briar-rose, when she does open her eyes, is merely content to gaze on her prince.

On the other hand, also appearing in this tale are dangerous crones capable of causing much mayhem. The thirteenth wise woman vindictively decrees an early death for Briar-rose and the old woman (who is either woefully ignorant or deliberately disobedient) defies the king's express command by retaining in her possession the spindle that sends Briar-rose into the deep sleep of 100 years.

Two Yoruba tales (*Taking a sacrifice to heaven* and *1400 cowries*) and one Euro-Canadian tale (*The louse and the flea*) are found in the "Negative" category of Table 15. In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the olokoshe's obsession with his wife is considered to be a frivolous activity which deflects his attention from more serious matters: , "The olokoshe was mating . . . he was too occupied flitting after his wife to be troubled with sacrifices" (T,22-25). In *The louse and the flea* the little female louse inadvertently begins the process of destruction because, in her clumsiness, she falls into the brew; the girl with the water pitcher completes the destruction by unleashing the flood that destroys everything. Both of these female characters also perish. Finally, victimized females also appear in *1400 cowries:* the old woman is pecked by one of her own hens (C,56) and that hen loses her chick to a hawk (C,69-71). Another woman is "careless with her baby" (C,100-101) and receives a beating for it (C,103). None of the females in this story possess positive qualities or receive fair treatment.

To summarize, the females in the fictitious Burmese societies contrast sharply with those populating the fictitious Yoruba communities. The Burmese females hold responsible positions in society, demonstrate wisdom in matters of fiscal and moral import, and are dominant influences in their children's lives. In contrast, Yoruba females are restricted to domestic roles, are physically abused, and do not overtly demonstrate any particular understanding of moral issues. The Euro-Canadian tales, which are positioned more or less medially between the continuum of the Burmese and Yoruba tales, are the only tales in which females perpetrate misfortune and mayhem.

THE AGED

These tales differ not only in their portrayals of females, but also in the way in which they depict the aged. One-half of the Yoruba tales have been placed in the "Positive" category of Table 16 on page 123; no Burmese or Euro-Canadian tales appear in that category. Seniority is especially important in the Yoruba tales, although some old people do perform important functions in the Euro-Canadian tales as well. This is not the case in the Burmese tales.

Elders are not treated with much respect in the Burmese tales. The six mendicants in *The seven mendicants* are outwitted by the youngest mendicant, and later in the story are shown to be very much in error in keeping the innkeeper enslaved for his role in the disappearance of the silver pieces. However, because they appear to act in good faith and are worthy of the innkeeper's faithful service (SM,40), this story has been placed in the "Mixed" category of Table 16. *Why the vulture is bald* has been similarly placed because old age is associated with stupidity and sourness and yet the old vulture also inspires compassion. The vulture was "originally a humble old bird, and rather stupid" (W,1-2) and in the end he is "a sour and ugly old bird" (W,22-23). Nevertheless, in the beginning of the tale the vulture is also the recipient of feathers donated by a concerned community.

TABLE 16

PORTRAYALS OF THE AGED

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed
		The seven mendicants Why the vulture is bald			Little Briar-rose	Ijapa and the hot water test Taking a sacrifice to heaven	1400 cowries	Oni and the great bird

All of the old people in the Euro-Canadian tales appear in *Little Briar-rose,* where they are treated with respect and serve as valuable sources of advice and information. When Briar-rose finds the old woman in the tower, she greets her politely: "'Good day, old mother,' said the King's daughter" (L,42), and seeks from her knowledge of spinning (L,42-45). The old men with whom the prince comes in contact also provide information:

> After long, long years a King's son came again to that country, and heard an old man talking about the thorn-hedge, and that a castle was said to stand behind it in which a wonderfully beautiful princess, named Briar-rose, had been asleep for a hundred years; and that the King and Queen and the whole court were asleep likewise. He had heard, too, from his grandfather, that many kings' sons had already come, and had tried to get through the thorny hedge, but they had

> remained sticking fast in it, and had died a pitiful death. Then the youth said: 'I am not afraid, I will go and see the beautiful Briar-rose.' The good old man might dissuade him as he would, he did not listen to his words (L,70-80).

However, despite their knowledge, the old people in this tale have their failings. In her isolation, the old woman has escaped the king's scrutiny and, however unwittingly, she, as the possessor of the spindle, is the agent of misfortune which sends Briar-rose into a prolonged sleep of 100 years. The old man is also fallible. He errs in attempting to dissuade the prince from seeking out Briar-rose. Had the prince followed this advice, he would not have realized his full potential.

A similar situation arises in *Oni and the great bird,* also placed in the "Mixed" category of Table 16. This old man is also a fountain of information and advice. He explains the life-style and customs of Ajo to Oni:

> 'Now,' said the old man, 'sit down and eat with us and I will explain. For many years now we, the people of Ajo, have been troubled by the nightly arrival of a giant eagle. We call it Anodo. It always appears on the approach of darkness and stays until the approach of dawn. Anybody who is unfortunate enough to be out of doors at the time of its appearance is sure to be killed by it. You were very fortunate, young man, to reach Ajo before darkness. Our king has ordered the ringing of bells to warn the people to return to their homes and lock the doors. None of us knows where the eagle comes from, or where it goes when it leaves us at dawn. It is a terrible curse and in the past it has killed many of our people' (O,44-56).

Like the old man in *Little Briar-rose,* this old man also cautions his protégé not to get involved:

> Oni returned to the old man's house and told him what had happened, and of his intention to challenge Anodo. The old man was very frightened and implored him to give up the idea, for he would only perish and perhaps all those in the house too. But Oni was not frightened. He took his bow and arrows and knives and examined them carefully (O,89-94).

This old man also underestimates the strength and abilities of the youth before him and also errs in encouraging apathy.

Other Yoruba tales have been placed in the "Positive" category of Table 16. That elders should be treated with respect is obvious in *Ijapa and the hot water test* when Ijapa claims that he should serve the water because he is the youngest (I,76-77). Seniority is so important in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* that the earth and the heavens actually go to war over the issue:

> 'Oh what a war now exists,
> A serious war it is indeed,
> When the Earth and Heavens quarrel.
> The rain would not come down to Earth,
> And all the crops would not grow green.
> Heaven claims seniority
> Over Earth--Earth over Heaven' (T,36-42)

In neither of these two tales does seniority carry negative connotations. The same is not true, however, for the only Yoruba tale found in the "Negative" category of Table 16. In *1400 cowries* the old tree stump has a "clumsy shape" (C,36) and the old woman is pecked by one of her own hens (C,55-56). It is interesting, however, that in both of these examples the aged character belongs to a second category which is not held in great esteem--the first is part of nature and the second is female. Thus, the negative treatment these two old characters receive may be more the result of gender and species than of age. Such an interpretation would explain the discrepancy between this tale's depiction of the aged and the overwhelmingly positive portrayals in *Ijapa and the hot water test* and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. In any event, however, the Yoruba tales as a whole do present the aged in a more positive light than do the Burmese stories.

NATURE

This final section of chapter four examines the attitudes toward nature prevalent in the tales told in Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland. As Table 17 on page 127 shows, these tales tend to depict nature in an ambivalent fashion, attributing to it both positive and negative qualities. These tales juxtapose the beauty and usefulness of nature with its cruelty and expendability.

Many of the tales placed in the "Mixed" category of Table 17 project a strong sense of beauty and order in nature. In Burma's *Why the vulture is bald* the vulture "[looks] a wonderful bird with a plumage of all colours" (W,11-12), and in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* the hedge of thorns becomes a mass of flowering beauty for Briar-rose's prince: "When the King's son came near to the thorn-hedge, it was nothing but large and beautiful flowers, which parted from each other of their own accord, and let him pass unhurt" (L,82-85). In *1400 cowries* from Yorubaland, the cotton tree calls attention to the roan's beauty (C,18) and in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the olokoshe is said to possess a "beautiful long tail and . . . magnificent black and white plumage" (T,22-24).

A number of the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales categorized as "Mixed" also portray nature as harmonious and orderly. In Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* King Lion's reign in his forest kingdom is backed by the force of law. In *The sole* (Canada) the fish choose a leader whose main function is the provision of law and order. The members of the societies in *Why the vulture is bald* (Burma) and *The louse and the flea* (Canada) show great compassion for others, the former in lending to the vulture feathers to cover himself, and the latter in the shared commiseration over the louse's misfortune.

TABLE 17

PORTRAYALS OF NATURE

BURMA			CANADA			YORUBALAND		
Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Negative	Mixed
		The crow and the wren	The peasant's wise daughter		Little Briar-rose		Oni and the great bird	1400 cowries
		The rabbit has a cold			The louse and the flea			Ijapa and the hot water test
		The seven mendicants			The sole			Taking a sacrifice to heaven
		Why the vulture is bald			The wolf and the fox			

In many of the same tales, however, nature is seen in a less positive light. The sole indulges in some spiteful name-calling, the vulture's companions in *Why the vulture is bald* severely chastise the vulture for his arrogance, and the spring in *The louse and the flea* destroys all of the other characters. Furthermore, predators and prey appear in Burma's *The rabbit* *has a cold* and *The crow and the wren*, Canada's *The wolf and the fox*, and Yorubaland's *1400 cowries*.

Justice and compassion are conspicuously absent in the Yoruba tale *Taking a sacrifice to heaven.* In this tale the altruistic vulture is confronted with the crass ingratitude of his community when, upon his return from heaven, he is refused refuge from the elements. However, this tale also stresses that despite its cruelty and thoughtlessness, nature is also manifestly useful to humanity. After all, in this tale a ram is sacrificed to appease the gods (T,5-6), a vulture conveys this offering to heaven, and man receives the benefits while simultaneously forgetting that he is indebted to the vulture (T,61-63).

The human exploitation of nature occurs in the tales from all three of the cultural groups. However, the Burmese characters are much less aggressive and destructive than their Euro-Canadian and Yoruba counterparts when interacting with natural elements. The exploitation of nature in the Burmese tales does not extend to husbandry. No characters farm. Nevertheless, characters do make use of nature. In *The seven mendicants*, for instance, the mendicants carry along a conch shell (SM,7), although the text is not explicit about its function. The youngest mendicant, however, does use it to trick the six mendicants of their 600 silver pieces. In *The crow and the wren* the pot, a man-made object, is to be mended with mud (CW,30-32).

The Euro-Canadian and Yoruba characters, on the other hand, actually domesticate nature. In *The wolf and the fox* farmers raise lambs (WF,6-7) and produce meat for human consumption (WF,38). In *Little Briar-rose* dogs and horses and pigeons are raised at the palace:

> The horses, too, went to sleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons upon the roof, the flies on the wall; even the fire that was flaming on the hearth became quiet and slept, the roast meat left off frizzling . . . And the wind fell, and on the trees before the castle not a leaf moved again (L,52-59).

Animals are utilized in *The peasant's wise daughter* as beasts of burden (P,42,54). Furthermore, the land is a source of sustenance and wealth, producing firewood (P,53), edible corn, and also the golden mortar which forever changes the course of the peasant's daughter's life.

Nature is also bountiful in the Yoruba tales. From the soil come the yams in *Ijapa and the hot water test*, and, from the animals, the labour for harvesting them:

> Morning came. Ijapa went to the chief's house, saying, 'Here I am.' Opolo the frog was already there, as were Ekun the leopard, Ekute the bush rat, Ewure the goat, Agbonrin the deer, and many others. They went out to the chief's fields to dig yams (I,12-16).

In *1400 cowries* the old woman raises hens (C,55-56), women collect mushrooms and feathers, and a hunter shoots a roan.

Thus, in the tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland, nature provides tools, food, warmth, and labour. In addition, nature also protects. In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the vulture's delivery of the sacrifice ensures the growth of crops and eliminates the possibility of human starvation. In Canada's *Little Briar-rose* a huge hedge shields the sleeping Briar-rose from prying eyes: "But round about the castle there began to grow a hedge of thorns, which every year became higher, and at last grew close up round the castle and all over it, so that there was nothing of it to be seen, not even the flag upon the roof" (L,60-63). In Burma's *The seven mendicants* the forest provides a refuge for thieves: "After walking some miles, the Youngest Mendicant slipped into the wood and ran off with his booty" (SM,27-29).

It is only in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales, however, that nature ravages humanity. The wolf and the fox in the Euro-Canadian tale repeatedly raid farmers, and a girl drowns in the spring in *The louse and the flea*. In *Little Briar-rose* many innocent princes suffer untimely and brutal deaths in the shrubbery: "the thorns held fast together, as if they had hands, and the youths were caught in them, could not get loose again, and died a miserable death" (L,67-69).

However, nature's malevolence is most powerfully felt in Yorubaland's *Oni and the great bird*, the only tale to be placed in the "Negative" category of Table 17. In this tale the eagle (Anodo) has no redeeming qualities. The old man describes Anodo as an enigma: "'None of us knows where the eagle comes from, or where it goes when it leaves us at dawn. It is a terrible curse and in the past it has killed many of our people'" (O,53-56). Furthermore, Anodo's actions are not only cruel, but also deliberate. He anticipates with delight the prospect of dismembering Oni:

> 'Ah fortune, I have found a victim tonight,
> I have lived many months without a kill,
> Will the singer come out and feel the sharpness
> Of my talons and of my beak? It will take me
> A moment to tear him to pieces. Come out' (O,111-115).

Finally, in this tale, as in the Euro-Canadian *The wolf and the fox*, man's survival entails, even requires, the destruction of his environment. The farmer in the Euro-Canadian tale protects his food source by killing the wolf, and in the Yoruba tale Oni's elimination of Anodo is cause for great celebration: "That night, for the first time for many years, the bells of Ajo did not sound the curfew. Instead, the streets were full of happy, dancing people" (O,198-200).

It is evident, then, that although some tales from each of the three cultures depict nature as beautiful and useful to man, the fictitious Euro-Canadian and Yoruba societies are much more exploitative than the fictitious Burmese societies. As well, the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba characters clash more with the elements and appear more likely to destruct their environments. It therefore appears reasonable to claim that, unlike the Burmese tales, the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales impart a "homo-centred" attitude.[1]

In conclusion, this chapter establishes that the protagonists in these tales told in Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland function in pastoral societies which are organized along similar lines. Kingdoms, courts, and the nuclear family appear in tales from all three cultures. Nevertheless, degrees of flexibility within the fictitious societies vary, with the Yoruba characters (especially the women) experiencing less mobility than the Burmese and Euro-Canadian characters. As well, seniority and religion are emphasized to a greater extent in the Yoruba tales than in the Burmese or Euro-Canadian tales. Finally, the fictitious Burmese societies view nature in a more positive light than the fictitious Euro-Canadian and Yoruba societies, which, while acknowledging its beauty and utility, are nevertheless more inclined to destroy it. In these tales, then, human society entails co-operation within an established set of political, economic, judicial, and kinship structures. However, the belief systems accompanying these institutions vary between the three groups, with religion and ancestors occupying a more central place in the world view expressed in the Yoruba tales. As well, certain recurring elements in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales (patriarchal families, negative portrayals of women and nature) convey a world view that is man-centred. In contrast, the Burmese presentation of those elements is more even-handed, and hence the term "man-centred" is less easily applied to the Burmese tales.

---

[1] This phrase was coined by M.V. Dimic, Professor of comparative literature, University of Alberta.

CHAPTER FIVE

NARRATION

"**Coherence** [is] a principle demanding that the parts of any composition be so arranged that the meaning of the whole may be immediately clear and intelligible. Words, phrases, clauses, within the sentence; and sentences, paragraphs, and chapters in larger pieces of writing are the units that, by their progressive and logical arrangement, make for *coherence* or, contrariwise, by illogical arrangement, result in *incoherence*."[1] Coherence in literature, however, is not restricted to a logical and progressive arrangement of words and ideas. Many scholars of narrative, including Roland Barthes, Philippe Hamon, and Susan Rubin Suleiman, argue persuasively that a coherent or "readable" text is largely distinguished by redundancies within the text:

> In effect, any text which aims at optimum communication or a maximal reduction of ambiguity will tend to be heavily redundant, thus eliminating the interference of 'noise.' Since in reading a text of any length one of the most obvious kinds of 'noise' is the reader's forgetfulness, we can predict that the longer the text the more it will need to multiply its redundancies.[2]

Chapter five, the first of two chapters dealing with tale structure, examines how coherence is achieved in these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba folktales. It establishes that the three groups of tales employ similar narrative techniques to achieve a high degree of readability. All of the tales feature clear plot lines. The tale audience is, in every case, led through the story by an omniscient and intrusive narrator whose comments highlight and clarify character and plot. In addition, all of the tales exhibit a very high degree of redundancy with respect to character and plot.

---

[1] C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, *A handbook to literature*, 94-95.
[2] Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Redundancy and the readable text," *Poetics Today*, 1 no.3 (Spring 1980): 122.

THE PLOT LINE

Within the folktale, as Max Lüthi points out in *The European folktale: form and nature*, coherence is largely the result of a clear plot line:

> The line of the plot unfolds before us untrammeled and clear. It is sustained by individual characters, and in the true folktale each individual character is significant to the story line. . . .
>
> A complete perspective is afforded by the juxtaposition and succession of narrative events rather than by their interlacement. Whatever in the real world forms an unfathomable whole or unfolds in slow, hidden development takes place in the folktale in sharply divided stages. . . . The clear single-strandedness *(Einsträngigkeit)* of its plot signifies an emphatic refusal to portray directly anything that is many-layered or inter-penetrating. Only a single sharply defined plot line is evident. A necessary correlative of the folktale's single-stranded plot is the division of this plot into more than one episode *(Mehrgliedrickeit)* . . . . The narrow line of the folktale plot is sustained by a plurality of episodes. Things that normally interpenetrate and coexist are detached and isolated, and their projection onto the story line makes them successive. Thus, single-strandedness and episodic structure are the foundation and the preconditions of the abstract style (1982:28-34).

According to Lüthi, the plot line of the European folktale has three main features: utility, single-strandedness, and episodic structure. The same three aspects of the plot line also characterize the Russian fairy tales studied by Vladimir Propp. In *Morphology of the folktale* Propp reveals the aspect of utility when he uncovers only seven categories of characters (villain, donor, helper, princess (and her father), dispatcher, hero, false hero), all with specific spheres of action (1968:79-80). Moreover, Propp observes a limited number of sequential functions:

> Only some 31 functions may be noted. The action of all tales included in our material develops within the limits of these functions. The same may also be said for the action of a great many other tales of the most dissimilar peoples. Further, if we read through all of the functions, one after another, we observe that one function develops out of another with logical and artistic necessity. We see that not a single function excludes another. They all belong to a single axis and not, as has already been mentioned, to a number of axes. . . . We observe that a large number of functions are arranged in pairs (prohibition-violation, reconnaissance-delivery, struggle-victory, pursuit-deliverance, etc.) (1968:64).

As Propp mentions, tales of dissimilar peoples exhibit the same plot structures. This is also borne out in the current study: the same features identified by Lüthi and Propp--utility, single-strandedness, and episodic structure--are also characteristic of these tales told in Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland.

Although all of the tales selected for this study exhibit single-strandedness and episodic structure, these characteristics are especially obvious in each culture's cumulative tale. Because the crow in Burma's *The crow and the wren* encounters each character successively, the tale consists of eight episodes in which the crow seeks, and is denied, assistance. The Euro-Canadian and Yoruba cumulative tales consist of seven and twelve episodes respectively. In *The louse and the flea* the little louse falls into the brew, thus catching the attention of the little flea, who begins to weep. The flea's weeping is noticed by the little broom, which then begins to sweep. The little cart observes the sweeping and subsequently begins to run. The pattern continues through the behaviour of four more characters until the spring drowns everyone. The meetings between the characters of *1400 cowries* are also successive rather than simultaneous, and hence the inclusion of twelve characters necessitates twelve episodes.

Other tales exhibit similar structures. In Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* King Lion questions his three ministers in sequence--first the bear, then the monkey followed by the rabbit. In *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the two protagonists do not visit the rest-house together. The drunkard's first visit, in which he acquires seven pots of gold, inspires the opium-eater to spend a night with the ghosts; the unfortunate outcome of the opium-eater's visit prompts the drunkard to return there once more. Even the wolf and the fox in the Euro-Canadian tale hunt separately most of the time. After the fox brings him a lamb, the wolf returns for another; after the fox brings him pancakes, the wolf returns for more. It is only in the last episode that the wolf and the fox seek out the salted meat together. During his trial, the Yoruba trickster, Ijapa, questions all of his witnesses successively, even though he asks them the same questions and they give him identical responses. As well, in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* the king interacts with only one other character at a time. The encounters between the king and his subjects are therefore consecutive rather than simultaneous.

Time is compressed in Burma's *The seven mendicants* and Canada's *Little Briar-rose* and *The sole*. In *The seven mendicants* the inn-keeper's daughter announces her intention of suing the mendicants and one day later her case is heard in court by Princess Learned-in-the-Law. Briar-rose grows up in one paragraph and in *The sole* the fish identify and deal with their societal problems in the space of ten lines. Furthermore, the appearances of the sole and the vultures in *Why the vulture is bald* and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* evolve very rapidly and are the result of inappropriate behaviour rather than a multitude of environmental factors. This compression further illustrates

Lüthi's point that events in the folktale do not unfold in slow, hidden development, but rather occur in sharply divided stages.

Finally, these tales forgo extraneous detail. Objects, settings, and characters usually appear only when they are significant to the plot. A good example comes from Canada's *Little Briar-rose*. Subsequent to receiving the information that Briar-rose will, fifteen years hence, prick her finger on a spindle, the king effects the removal of all spindles from his kingdom and from the tale: "The King . . . gave orders that every spindle in the whole kingdom should be burnt" (L,28-30). No spindles reappear until Briar-rose's fifteenth birthday. Other objects appearing in these tales have obvious functions. The conch shell in Burma's *The seven mendicants* is necessary because the youngest mendicant uses it to trick the inn-keeper. The golden mortar in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* leads the peasant girl to her future husband. In the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* Oni's boots serve to identify Oni when confusion arises about who killed Anodo.

As mentioned in chapter four of this dissertation, these tales for the most part lack precise settings. Aside from the Euro-Canadian *Little Briar-rose*, very little description occurs in these tales. Furthermore, characters only appear in order to fulfil specific functions. Even very minor characters have active roles. The village headman in Burma's *The seven mendicants* lends money to the inn-keeper's daughter; the frog in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* appears to predict the birth of Briar-rose; the peasant in *The peasant's wise daughter* provides the queen with an opportunity to anger the king; the farmers in *The wolf and the fox* punish the wolf; the old man's people in *Oni and the great bird* throw Oni into Anodo's path and the hunter steals Oni's reward. There are no passive characters who are permitted merely to observe the proceedings. Those who do gather merely as spectators of the events are quickly pressed into service as witnesses for the defense in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test:*

> Ijapa showed his calabash of water to this one and that one, each in turn, as evidence of the large amount of hot water he would drink. They could see that Ijapa was not shrinking from the ordeal. But Ijapa spent a great deal of time at this business, and the entire village was constantly singing, 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!' (I,119-124).

Thus it is clear that the streamlined plot line with its single-stranded and episodic structure is an important, if not exclusive, aspect of coherence in these folktales.

THE NARRATOR

> **Point of view** signifies the way a story gets told--the perspective or perspectives established by an author through which the reader is presented with the characters, actions, setting, and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. . . . In a **third-person narrative**, the narrator is someone outside the story who refers to all the characters in the story proper by name, or as 'he,' 'she,' 'they' . . . .
>
> The **omniscient point of view** . . . is a common term for the assumption in a work of fiction that the narrator knows everything that needs to be known about the agents and events; that he is entirely free to move as he will in time and place, and to shift from character to character, reporting (or concealing) what he chooses of their speech and actions; and also that he has 'privileged' access to a character's thoughts and feelings and motives, as well as to his overt speech and actions.
>
> Within this mode, the **intrusive narrator** is one who not only reports but freely comments on his characters, evaluating their actions and motives and expressing his views about human life in general; ordinarily, all the omniscient narrator's reports and judgments are to be taken as authoritative. . . . Alternatively, the omniscient narrator may choose to be **unintrusive**, or **impersonal**: he describes, reports, or 'shows' the action in dramatic scenes, without introducing his own comments or judgments.[1]

---

[1] M.H. Abrams, *A glossary of literary terms*, 133-135.

Many scholars, including Ilhan Basgöz, P.V. Lintur, and Mária Kosová, have studied narrative voice and point of view in folklore. Kosová identifies in folkloristic prose four types of narrators:

> 1) The *narrator-author* is the so-called 'omniscient narrator'[1] who divines and defines the development of the topic, sees the persons both from outside and inside, describes their actions as well as their thoughts and sometimes presents their monologues. He penetrates into the text with commentaries and addresses the audience, he points at the difference between the time in which the story is told and the time in which it takes place. Behind the figures' backs, he makes contacts with the audience. Stylistically he expresses himself in description and equally in scenic presentation through dialogues.
>
> 2) *The type of the apersonal narrator* keeps in the background and does not penetrate into the text. In his narration, description is subordinated to scenic presentation so that the audience gets the illusion of being in the middle of the story.
>
> 3) *The direct narrator* belongs to the world of narration; he himself participates in the story, or the story happened to real people and the narrator identifies himself with them. This type of narration is typical for demonologic legends, which are often presented in the first person singular. In the narration there prevails description.
>
> 4) *The narrator with the 'camera's eye* "[2] notices only external features and actions of the characters, presents their dialogues, but never gives any monologues. In the narration description is equivalent to scenic presentations (1981:305-306).

Without exception, all of the tales included in this current study are third-person narratives and their narrators are omniscient, intrusive, and reliable. None of the narrators are characters in the tales they narrate. They are physically, temporally, and frequently, morally distant from the figures whose stories they tell. The narrators speak of past events involving characters who do not appear to be based on figures from their audiences.

---

[1] term from W. Kayser, *Die vortragsreise. Wer erzählt den roman?* Bern, 1958, 211.

[2] term of C.E. Magny, *L'age du roman américain.* Paris, 1948, 50.

Thus, while the narrators relate to their audiences events which they often appear to have personally witnessed, they are, at the storytelling event, temporally and physically removed from the story characters.

Throughout the stories the narrators demonstrate their omniscience in their freedom to move with the characters in time and place, and in their access to privileged information. For example, in Burma's *The crow and the wren* the narrator observes the initial meeting between the crow and the wren, accompanies the crow when he calls on the wren a week later, and follows the crow through all of his encounters with the other characters, faithfully reporting their verbal exchanges. In Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* the narrator is present when the peasant and his daughter discover a golden mortar on their land, and moves with the peasant to the prison, where he knows that the peasant lives on bread and water and laments his folly in failing to heed his daughter's advice. The narrator also witnesses the private meeting between the peasant and the queen, is present in the palace when the king banishes the queen, and follows the king and queen to the queen's hut. In Yorubaland's *1400 cowries* the narrator begins with the indigent cricket and follows each character who assumes the cricket's debt, reporting their speech and actions.

In the same tales the narrators demonstrate that they have access to the characters' minds. The narrator of *The crow and the wren* explains the crow's curious action in releasing the captured wren by relating to his audience the crow's private thoughts: "The Crow thought to himself, 'This Wren is old and tough, but her daughter will be young and soft,' and so he suggested to the Wren, 'I will let you go if you will promise to give me your daughter to eat on the seventh day from now.' The Wren promised and the Crow let her go" (CW,4-9). In *The peasant's wise daughter* the narrator reveals the peasant's personal reasons for seeking the queen's assistance in reclaiming his lost foal: "Now [the peasant] had heard how gracious his lady the Queen was because she herself had sprung from poor peasant folks, so he went to her and begged her to see if she could not help him to get his foal back again" (P,65-68). Similarly, in *1400 cowries* the narrator knows that the hen pecks the woman because it hopes to get some of the mushroom (C,56-57) and that the king's drummer beats the woman because he is angry (C,102-103), an emotion which is shared by the prince who witnesses that beating: "The king's son happened to see the drummer beating the woman, and he was very angry and beat the drummer too" (C,118-119).

The narrators of these tales are very intrusive. This intrusiveness is the result of their great desire to eliminate ambiguity and is best exemplified in the following quotation from Burma's *The rabbit has a cold:* "The Lion had no choice but to let the Rabbit go home and, needless to say, the Rabbit never went near him again" (R,39-41). In this example, the narrator himself admits that he imparts superfluous information when he assures the audience that the rabbit avoided the king thereafter, and yet he supplies that information regardless. This intrusiveness is evident in the tales from all three cultures.

The narrators' intrusions in these tales include explanations, evaluations, general comments, and definitions. Sometimes the narrators simultaneously explain and evaluate. For example, the narrator of Canada's *The sole* concurrently explains and evaluates when he states that the fish decide to select a leader because they are "discontented" with the disordered state of their kingdom (S,1-10). In *Little Briar-rose* the narrator comments that the thirteenth wise woman is in an angry and vengeful mood when she curses Briar-rose: "She wished to avenge herself for not having been invited [to the feast]" (L,19-20). In Yorubaland's *Oni and the great bird* the narrator explains that the people of Oni's birthplace try to kill Oni out of fear (O,10-14); that it is the fear of Anodo's vengeance that leads the old man's people to throw Oni to the mercy of Anodo (O,116-118); and that the old man tries to dissuade Oni from challenging Anodo because he is "frightened" (O,90-93). Moreover, he states unequivocably that although Oni has been accused, found guilty, and punished by his community, he is innocent and thus undeserving of such treatment: "although Oni had nothing to do with the fire, he was found guilty and banished" (O,17-18). The narrator of *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* attributes the community's failure to assist the vulture to the selfishness of the individuals within it: "But they were all too busy and selfish, and refused. . . . The people also, like the birds, had forgotten his service and drove him away" (T,60-63).

At other times, the narrators' explanations involve little or no evaluation. Where this is the case the narrator's foremost intent is not to judge, but merely to clarify, his characters' actions or motivations. For instance, the narrator of the Burmese *The drunkard and the opium-eater* states that the drunkard and the opium-eater become close friends because they are both societal outcasts (D,2-3) and that they avoid the cemetery rest-house because they believe that it is haunted: "But they avoided one particular rest-house, namely the one at the cemetery, for all believed that it was the meeting place of the ghosts of the village every night" (D,5-7). The narrator of the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* also refrains from judging his character when he simply explains why Ijapa is interested in helping the chief: "The idea interested Ijapa because he had neglected to care for his own fields, which therefore had produced nothing, while the chief's fields were full of yams. He thought about how he might use the occasion to fill his empty storehouse" (I,2-7). Although this explanation shows that Ijapa is not exactly altruistic, the narrator himself never suggests that Ijapa's thinking is incorrect or immoral. Hence the narrator explains, but does not evaluate, Ijapa's motivations.

Sometimes the narrators provide explanations that contradict the explanations that characters give for their own actions. There are examples from all three cultures. In Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* the narrator's claim that the king's test is a sham, intended only to provide the king with an excuse for murder, is at odds with the explanation the king gives his unsuspecting ministers:

> King Lion appointed the Bear, the Monkey, and the Rabbit to be his ministers of state, and together they roamed the forest. But one day the Lion became tired of their company, and wanted to kill and eat them. However, as he himself had chosen them to be his ministers, he had to think of an excuse which would give a semblance of legality to his unjust act.
>
> So King Lion called his three ministers of state, and said to them, 'My lords, you have been my ministers for some time, and I must now find out whether high office has spoilt you' (R,1-11).

King Lion presents the test as the serious and unavoidable duty of a conscientious monarch; the narrator repudiates it as a poorly disguised vindication of murder.

The narrator of Canada's *The wolf and the fox* similarly contradicts the fox. The narrator says that the fox keeps running to the hole "to find out if his body [is] still thin enough to slip through it" (WF,44-47). This explanation differs from that given by the fox to the wolf: "'I must see that no one is coming'" (WF,49). The same thing occurs in the Yoruba trickster tale *Ijapa and the hot water test*. The narrator explains that Ijapa's basket of yams fills slowly because Ijapa is stealing one-half of the harvest; Ijapa claims that he is being extra careful with the chief's yams:

> Morning came. . . . Ijapa, he put a yam into his basket, then dropped a yam into the hole he had dug the night before. He put another yam into his basket and dropped another one into the hole. For each one he put in the basket he put another in the hole. Some of the workers scolded him for being slow, but Ijapa said: 'I have great respect for the chief's yams. I handle them gently so as not to bruise them' (I,12-25).

It is clear that when the narrator explains and evaluates characters' desires, motivations, goals, and actions, he is providing characterization. The narrator's explanations also serve to clarify plot and sometimes these explanations seem to reveal a reluctance on the part of the narrator to let members of the audience think for themselves. This is particularly evident in tales containing tricks. In Burma's *The seven mendicants* the narrator explains why the youngest mendicant leaves the conch shell behind: "The Youngest Mendicant, as he listened to the words of his Elders, thought out a trick to cheat them of the money, and so he left their conch shell on a bench" (SM,5-7). The narrator then describes and explains the trick:

> Then the Mendicants walked away, but when they reached the Inn gate, the Youngest Mendicant, saying that he had forgotten to bring the conch shell, turned and went back. Entering the Inn and quietly taking the conch shell, he said to the Inn-Keeper, 'Sir, my masters have changed their mind, and now they want to take away with them the bag containing the silver pieces.' 'But, Young Mendicant,' exclaimed the Inn-Keeper in surprise, 'they just told me that I should not give it back unless all the seven were present.' 'Oh, they are waiting at the gate,' replied the Youngest Mendicant with an innocent look. 'You can shout to them and ask them whether you should give the bag to me.' The Inn-Keeper went to the door and shouted to the Mendicants, 'Masters, shall I

> give it to him?' The Six Mendicants, waiting impatiently at the gate, shouted back, 'Please give it to him, for we are in a hurry.' The Inn-Keeper then gave the bag to the Youngest Mendicant. Of course, the Six Mendicants thought that the Inn-Keeper was referring to the conch shell, and the Inn-Keeper thought that they were referring to the bag (SM,8-25).

The last sentence of the quotation reveals that the narrator cannot resist explaining the trick even though he realizes that his audience has probably understood it.

A similar thing happens in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* when the king asks the peasant girl to come to him "not clothed, not naked, not riding, not walking, not in the road, and not off the road" (P,37-38). The narrator carefully explains how each aspect of the girl's attire and conveyance satisfies the conditions set out in the riddle:

> So she went away, put off everything she had on, and then she was not clothed, and took a great fishing net, and seated herself in it and wrapped it entirely round and round her, so that she was not naked, and she hired an ass, and tied the fisherman's net to its tail, so that it was forced to drag her along, and that was neither riding nor walking. The ass had also to drag her in the ruts, so that she only touched the ground with her big toe, and that was neither being in the road nor off the road. And when she arrived in that fashion, the King said she had guessed the riddle and fulfilled all the conditions (P,39-48).

Finally, the narrator in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* describes how Ijapa manages to delay his contact with the hot water by arranging to drink last (I,76-77) and by wasting a great deal of time showing his calabash of water to several witnesses (I,96-118). At this point, however, the narrator is unable to resist explaining the trick:

> Ijapa showed his calabash of water to this one and that one, each in turn, as evidence of the large amount of hot water he would drink. They could see that Ijapa was not shrinking from the ordeal. But Ijapa spent a great deal of time at this business, and the entire village was constantly singing, 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!'
>
> Meanwhile, the water in the calabash was getting cool. At last the chief said: 'Ijapa, we have declared ourselves enough. You do well. But now let us get on with it.'

> So Ijapa drank. Because the water had become cool, it did not pain him. He emptied the calabash. The chief nodded his approval. . . . as an additional proof of his innocence, Ijapa jumped into the pot from which the water had come. The water in the pot also was cool (I,119-134).

The narrator of this tale does not assume that his audience will surmise that the water has cooled; he tells the audience that it is so.

Aside from explaining character and plot, the narrators of these tales also clarify the language of the stories. They explain their own statements either through elaboration, definition, or restatement. For example, the narrators of Burma's *Why the vulture is bald*, Canada's *The sole* and *The peasant's wise daughter*, and Yorubaland's *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* all make statements which they subsequently elaborate upon. In the Burmese tale the narrator first states that the vulture is "conceited" (W,13) and then describes what he means: "He strutted about in his borrowed feathers, and declared that he was the most beautiful of all the birds. He became more and more proud until he asked the birds to recognize him as their king" (W,13-17). In the Euro-Canadian tale *The sole* the narrator's first sentence attributes the fishes' dissatisfaction to the disordered state of the kingdom: "The fishes had for a long time been discontented because no order prevailed in their kingdom" (S,1-2). In his second sentence the narrator elaborates by describing this lack of order: "None of them turned aside for the others, but all swam to the right or the left as they fancied, or darted between those who wanted to stay together, or got into their way; and a strong one gave a weak one a blow with its tail, which drove it away, or else swallowed it up without more ado" (S,2-7). In *The peasant's wise daughter* the narrator calls the peasant "poor" and then, in the same sentence, justifies this adjective by remarking that the peasant possesses neither land nor sons: "There was once a poor peasant who had no land, but only a small house, and one daughter" (P,1-2). The narrator of the Yoruba tale *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* first assesses the birds as a group:

> But when the birds arrived they all refused to carry the sacrifice. Heaven was far off, it would mean a long and tiring journey for them, and they were far more interested in flying around and displaying their great beauty to each other. Work, even when it was connected with carrying a sacrifice to Heaven, was far too menial for any of them to undertake. They had never liked work (T,9-15).

The narrator then develops this pejorative assessment by examining specific examples of lazy birds:

> The ega thought his gold and black plumage the most beautiful of any, and he was far too restless and noisy to work for others, for, when he was not building nests, he was pulling down his old ones. The little red-billed ologiri was far too busy hopping daintily about inside the houses and on the verandas and being very sociable to everybody. The olokoshe was mating, and was very conspicuous because of his beautiful long tail and his magnificent black and white plumage; he was too occupied flitting after his wife to be troubled with sacrifices. And so it was with all the other birds, each one was unable to help for one reason or another, and each in turn refused (T,16-27).

In addition, narrators sometimes define terms. In the Burmese tale *The seven mendicants* the term "bailee" is clarified when Princess Learned-in-the-Law states that the inn-keeper is the bailee (SM,69). The term "cowry" is explained in the following passage from the Yoruba tale *1400 cowries*:

> Unfortunately he had no money with which to pay his father-in-law the dowry. The cricket therefore went to a certain moneylender, who was also a palm wine seller, and borrowed fourteen hundred cowries. Instead of taking the money to his father-in-law, he spent it on palm wine (C,2-6).

This quotation illustrates how the narrator leads his audience to the understanding that the cowry shell is a monetary unit. He first introduces a known term--"money"--and establishes that the cricket has none of it. The narrator then sends the cricket to a moneylender with the express purpose of borrowing money. Therefore, when the moneylender gives the cricket cowries, the narrator implies that the cowry is the monetary unit. The implication is confirmed when the narrator says that the cricket then spends this money on palm wine. In addition, that the cowry is in fact the monetary unit is subsequently re-stated by several characters throughout the tale. The cricket tells the cotton tree: "'Fourteen hundred cowries is the debt you owe to me'" (C,13); the old woman tells the hen: "'Four hundred and one thousand cowries is my price'" (C,67); the king goes to his treasury, withdraws fourteen hundred cowries (C,151-153) and says: "'From my treasury funds we surely must pay'" (C,156). Fourteen hundred cowries is thus the debt, the price, the funds, and hence must be money.

Furthermore, throughout this tale the term "fourteen hundred cowries" is used interchangeably with "four hundred and one thousand cowries" (C,67), "one thousand and four hundred shells" (C,41), "one thousand and four hundred cowries" (C,82), "twice seven hundred cowries" (C,98). This restating of a term or phrase is also evident in *Oni and the great bird*. The narrator describes Oni's state at the end of the fight: "The boy rolled over, a thousand lights dancing before his eyes, then all went blank, and he felt himself sinking down and down into a bottomless pit" (O,136-138). The narrator then restates his words in straightforward language: "He was knocked unconscious" (O,139). Therefore, the narrators of these tales use restatement, definition, and elaboration to clarify tale language.

Finally, the narrators of these tales intersperse general comments throughout the texts. In Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* the narrator comments on a natural phenomenon when he says that "as the Lion was [a] great meat-eater, naturally a foul smell came out from his mouth" (R,13-14). Another generality surfaces in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* when the narrator asserts that bread and water is the usual prison fare: "The servants had daily to carry him bread and water, which is what people get in prison" (P,21-22). In the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the narrator ends the story by stating a general truth: "Even the most despised are capable of doing good, and they are not always rewarded by their fellow men for their pains" (T,73-74). These three examples show that narrators' generalities may contribute to characterization (as is the case with King Lion), may clarify plot (as is the case in the Yoruba tale), or, as happens in the Euro-Canadian tale, may serve no obvious function at all.

In addition to their omniscience and intrusiveness, all of the narrators of these tales are reliable. For the most part, their credibility is taken for granted because they appear to speak of events that they themselves have witnessed. There are no self-conscious interruptions where the narrator admits that his version of the events is prejudiced, incomplete, or untrue. In all but one tale the narrator is the sole source of information and thus the authority on the subject. The only exception to this occurs in the Yoruba tale *Ijapa and the hot water test.* The narrator begins this tale with an admission that his story originates elsewhere: "It is said that one time Ijapa was called upon to come and help harvest the chief's fields" (I,1-2). In this tale, then, the narrator overtly distances himself from the tale's characters when he denies any personal involvement, even as a witness, in the events he will describe. Nevertheless, he settles doubts about the authenticity of his account by appealing to authority with the words "it is said". Since he refers to what may be the general knowledge of his audience, this narrator is somewhat constrained to provide a faithful rendition of what he and possibly others have heard. In addition, the narrators' reliability is also established through redundancy. The narrators' comments are all consistent with each other and are frequently reinforced by the characters' actions and their dialogue.

REDUNDANCY

Max Lüthi writes in *The European folktale: form and nature* that "all orally transmitted literature is fond of repetition, as it provides a point of rest for both the speaker and the listener" (1982:46). He identifies two prominent types of redundancy--the verbatim repetition of entire sentences and paragraphs and the repetition of events. This repetition, he argues, is typical of the folktale because it is a mnemotechnical device (1984:69) and because the folktale strives for absolute certainty:

> Unlike the real world, the folktale knows nothing of numerical diversity and randomness; it aspires to abstract certainty. This aspiration is also evident in the verbatim repetition of entire sentences and long paragraphs. If the same event is repeated, it makes sense to state it in identical terms. Many storytellers avoid variation, not out of incompetence but because of stylistic demands. Strict word-for-word repetition, when it occurs, is an element of the folktale's abstract style. Such rigidity corresponds to that of the metals and minerals that abound in the folktale. Sentences repeated verbatim at certain intervals also have an articulating role. Like a rhythmically recurring ornament, they ring out in the corresponding parts of the story at certain specified points. A similar result is produced by the recurrence of an individual expression within a sentence. When the word 'bellissimo' is repeated four times in the course of eleven lines . . . we perceive an articulating effect that would not be produced if different adjectives were employed in each instance. Thus, the folktale almost spontaneously achieves a consistency of style of the sort that modern aesthetics requires of true works of art: the special character of the overall composition is reflected in its constituent parts, right down to the individual verbal expression (1982:33).

Repetition also typifies these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba narratives. Within the tales there is a high degree of redundancy both with respect to character and with respect to plot. Character redundancies are apparent when an individual's mental and physical attributes complement one another and when his personal traits are reflected in his actions, dialogue, and setting. Plot redundancies are apparent when a particular event either occurs, or is described, more than once. The narrator plays a key role in establishing redundancies both on the level of plot and on the level of character.

Many of the most overt and redundant intrusions of these narrators are directed at the characters. The narrators frequently define characters with simple adjectives and these assessments are reinforced either through a repetition of that word or, more indirectly, through action and dialogue. For instance, in Burma's *Why the vulture is bald* the narrator mentions twice that the vulture is "ugly" (W,21,22). He also assesses the vulture's character. On one occasion he calls the vulture "conceited" (W,13). The vulture's conceit is reflected in his actions: "He strutted about in his borrowed feathers, and declared that he was the most beautiful of all the birds" (W,13-15). Such a declaration of one's incomparable beauty is indeed evidence of excessive and inappropriate pride and hence there is redundancy between the narrator's assessment of his character's personality and that character's actions.

The narrators in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales similarly evaluate their characters. On more than one occasion in Canada's *The wolf and the fox*, the narrator tells the audience that the wolf is avaricious. He calls him "the greedy wolf" (WF,18) and an "old glutton" (WF,57). This assessment is reinforced by the words of another character, the fox, who, on two different occasions asks the wolf: "'Why are you such a glutton?'" (WF,17,34). In addition, the wolf's own actions also indicate that he is greedy. The wolf is never satisfied: after the fox presents him with one lamb, he returns for another; after gobbling down the six pancakes provided by the fox, the wolf attempts to steal more for himself; and finally, ignoring the fox's warning to limit his intake of salted meat, the wolf so gorges himself that he cannot escape from the cellar when the farmer appears. Thus the wolf's characterization is heavily redundant. He is said to be avaricious four times, and he himself demonstrates that this is so on three different occasions.

Character redundancies are also prevalent in the Yoruba tales. In *Oni and the great bird* the narrator mentions that Oni is "strange" (O,1). This adjective is redundant with Oni's appearance and attributes: he was born wearing a pair of boots which grow as he does (O,1-3), and he is also immortal: "It was during the battle that Oni made a second discovery about himself, which separated him from his fellow men and made him different. The enemy arrows did not seem to harm him. Many pierced his body which in the ordinary course of events should have slain him" (O,4-9). In addition, it is mentioned sixteen times in the course of the text that Oni's opponent is very large. In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the narrator states twice that the birds of the community are self-centred. He asserts that they fail to assist the vulture because "they [are] all too busy and selfish" (O,60) and blames them for the vulture's altered appearance: "His burnt feathers never grew again, a reminder to the selfish people who refused to help him" (T,70-72). These comments are also supported by the actions of the characters. The birds are selfish because in refusing to carry the sacrifice they put personal concerns ahead of community interests. Moreover, their refusal to assist the vulture in his hour of need points to a lack of generosity.

At times it is not the narrator, but rather a character in the tale, who evaluates another character. For instance, in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* it is the king who, upon hearing that the peasant's daughter was opposed to making the king a present of the mortar, says that the girl is wise: "'If you have a daughter who is as wise as that, let her come here'" (P,32-33). He applies this term a second time when he asks the girl if she is really so wise (P,33-34) and then sets her a riddle to test her wisdom. Therefore, in this tale the peasant girl first demonstrates wisdom on two occasions, the first when she suggests that they ask the king for some land and the second when she argues that the king will require the pestle if presented with the mortar. The king then states that she is wise. In addition, the girl's subsequent actions support this label. She solves the riddle, reddresses the peasant's grievance, and turns her husband's anger and rejection into renewed love and desire. Similarly, in Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* it is King Lion who calls the rabbit wise: "The Lion now said to the Rabbit, 'Wise Rabbit, what sort of smell issues from my mouth?'" (R,33-34). The rabbit then demonstrates wisdom by responding with a polite, non-commital answer which forces the king to release him. Hence there is redundancy between one character's assessment of a second character and the actions of that second character.

In the same tale, however, the narrator contradicts the slurs King Lion casts on the characters of the bear and the monkey. King Lion, insulted by the bear's forthrightness, accuses the bear of treason. After the monkey lies to him, the lion denounces the monkey as a liar and a flatterer. The narrator, however, claims that the bear is "ever-truthful" (R,15). Hence the bear responds as he does not because he is a traitor, who wishes to insult his sovereign, but rather because lying is out-of-character. The narrator also explains the reason behind the monkey's lie: "The Monkey, after witnessing the fate of the Bear, thought that the only way to escape with his life was to resort to flattery, and said, 'Your Majesty, it is a delicious smell, as sweet as the choicest perfume'" (R,22-26). The narrator points out that the king has already demonstrated a lack of appreciation for truth and hence, fearing for his life, the monkey is driven to falsehood. By vindicating the bear and the monkey, the narrator demonstrates the injustice of a king who, while pretending to value honesty and loyalty, murders those possessing those qualities. In so doing, the narrator provides supporting evidence for his own claim that the king's action is "unjust" (R,7). Once again, then, redundancy exists between the narrator's evaluation of a character and that character's actions.

Thus, there are many examples which illustrate redundancies between the descriptors applied to characters and the actions of those characters. In addition, other types of character redundancies are also common in these tales. As mentioned in chapter two of this dissertation, redundancies frequently occur between a character's personality and his appearance. Characters who lack virtue also frequently lack positive physical features and abilities. This connection sometimes becomes apparent in the narrator's verbs when he describes a character's actions or his words. In Canada's *The wolf and the fox* the wolf is coarse and so are his eating habits. The wolf "devours" the lamb (WF,9), "swallow[s] down the pancakes in an instant" (WF,26) and, upon his arrival in the farmer's cellar, "attack[s the meat] instantly" (WF,42-43). His other actions are similarly graceless: he attacks the lamb clumsily (WF,11) and tears down the dish of pancakes, causing it to break (WF,27-28). In contrast, the "crafty" (WF,49) fox is adept and graceful. Because he slips, peeps, and snatches, instead of tearing and breaking, he is successful: "They went there, and the fox slipped round the house, and peeped and sniffed about until he discovered where the dish was, and then snatched six pancakes and carried them to the wolf" (WF,22-24).

Sometimes the narrator's verbs are redundant with a given character's status. That is, the narrator's choice of characters often involves the juxtaposition of high-status individuals with figures lacking in prestige and power. The status relationships set out by the narrator are often re-established in their dialogue. For example, in Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* the narrator includes a king and his three ministers: "King Lion appointed the Bear, the Monkey, and the Rabbit to be his ministers of state, and together they roamed the forest" (R,1-3). The narrator thus immediately and clearly establishes that the lion is more powerful than the other characters. This power-ridden relationship is further revealed in the dialogue:

> So King Lion called his three ministers of state, and said to them, 'My lords, you have been my ministers for some time, and I must now find out whether high office has spoilt you.' The Lion opened his mouth wide, and asked the Bear to state what sort of smell issued from the royal mouth. As the Lion was [a] great meat-eater, naturally a foul smell came out from his mouth.
>
> The Bear, ever truthful, said, 'Your Majesty, it is a foul smell.'
>
> 'Rank treason,' roared the Lion in anger. 'You insult the king to his face. The punishment for treason is death.' So saying he pounced upon the Bear and killed him (R,8-20).

This quotation is heavily redundant. Firstly, the king restates the relationships earlier established by the narrator when he repeats that the other three characters are his ministers. Secondly, King Lion's announcement that he intends to test his ministers meets with no opposition.

The lack of opinion (and choice) regarding their participation further stresses the three ministers' lack of power. Thirdly, King Lion "roar[s] in anger" at the bear's unacceptable response. The accusation of rank treason and personal insult deserving death are angry words which support the narrator's assessment of the king's mood. In addition, the king's response also indicates that he wields power over his minister. After all, a superior is more likely to roar in anger at a subordinate than is a subordinate to roar in anger at a superior.

Such redundancy is also evident in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. The verbs associated with the various characters are redundant with their status. High-status individuals command, order, demand; low-status individuals seek permission, ask, beg, and obey. Upon the birth of his daughter, the king in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* "orders" a great feast (L,9). After his daughter has been cursed by the thirteenth wise woman, the king "orders" the destruction of all spindles in the kingdom (L,28-30). Issuing commands is consistent with his status as king.

The power and prestige of other characters in this tale is also evident in their dialogue. The thirteenth wise woman is discourteous and curt:

> When eleven of them had made their promises, suddenly the thirteenth came in. She wished to avenge herself for not having been invited, and without greeting, or even looking at anyone, she cried with a loud voice: 'The King's daughter shall in her fifteenth year prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead.' And, without saying a word more, she turned round and left the room (L,18-23).

This character fails to observe common courtesies such as greetings and leave-takings. She interrupts the proceedings and delivers a cruel decree, demonstrating a total lack of consideration for others. Moreover, her words are delivered in the imperative mood: "the King's daughter shall". Such a decree indicates that the character possesses, or at least believes she possesses, the power to control others. Thus the wise woman's dialogue points to a powerful personality in the kingdom and is redundant with her title of "wise woman", the king's view that wise women should be fêted, and with her action in producing a curse so powerful that it cannot be retracted by any other character.

The dialogue in *The peasant's wise daughter* also emphasizes the status of the characters. In this tale the king "commands" the servants to bring the prisoner before him (27-30), "orders" the queen's father to be released (P,48), and "commands" the queen to return to her peasant's hut:

> When the King reached home again, he said to his wife: 'Why have you behaved so falsely to me? I will not have you any longer for a wife; your time is up, go back to the place from whence you came--to your peasant's hut.' One favor, however, he granted her; she might take with her the one thing that was dearest and best in her eyes; and thus was she dismissed. She said: 'Yes, my dear husband, if you command this, I will do it,' and she embraced him and kissed him, and said she would take leave of him (P,88-95).

The queen herself "orders" a powerful sleeping draught (P,95-96). In contrast, the peasant "begs" the queen to get his foal back for him (P,67). Thus, the dialogue is redundant with the characters' status.

Dialogue and narrative summary have the same effect in the Yoruba tales. In *1400 cowries* relationships are spelled out in the greetings. The characters repeat the relationships established by the narrator. After the narrator of *1400 cowries* states that "the king's son" has become involved, the drummer addresses him as "O prince". The king and his son are the only characters who are formally addressed with the word "O". That the monarchs are powerful is further revealed in the words used. The drummer begs: "Spare me, I beg you, and I will serve you forever" (C,122), and the king orders:

> 'O son, as you say, this trouble is great.
> From my treasury funds we surely must pay.
> Many of my subjects are heavily in debt.
> First fourteen hundred to you for the drummer.
> Then the drummer pays the woman this money.
> The woman passes on the cowries to the hawk,
> The hawk must pay the money to the hen,
> Next the hen will pay the cowries to the woman,
> And the woman must pass the money to the stump,
> Then the stump will hand it over to the hunter.
> This money the hunter will give to the wounded roan,
> The roan must pay the debt to the cotton tree,
> And the cotton tree owes these cowries to the cricket,
> If the cricket isn't drunk, he pays the wine seller.
> O fourteen hundred cowries from my treasury,
> The gods will be angry if we do not pay up' (C,155-170).

The king in *Oni and the great bird* is also accustomed to commanding obedience. He tells Oni: "'I have issued orders to my remaining hunters not to try, as enough of them have been killed already'" (O,80-82).

One of the most interesting examples of how narrative summary is redundant with dialogue occurs in *Ijapa and the hot water test*. Again, the narrator sets up status differences by including a chief who has the power and the right to compel the cooperation of other characters: "one time Ijapa was called upon to come and help harvest the chief's fields" (I,1-2). That the chief deserves respect is evident when the other characters all assist in the harvest, and in Ijapa's response to the criticism that he works too slowly. Ijapa says: "'I have great respect for the chief's yams. I handle them gently so as not to bruise them'" (I,23-25). Yet although Ijapa pretends to be respectful, addressing the chief as "great chief" (I,40,97) and "sir" (I,47,65), his dialogue shows that he is disrespectful of the chief's authority. First of all, the narrator makes it quite clear that Ijapa lies when he asserts that he has great respect for the chief's yams:

> The idea interested Ijapa because he had neglected to care for his own fields, which therefore had produced nothing, while the chief's fields were full of yams. He thought about how he might use the occasion to fill his empty storehouse. A plan came to him. In the night he went to the chief's fields and dug a deep hole. He made the opening small at the top, and he sprinkled leaves and grass around the opening to disguise it. Then he carried away the dirt from the hole and threw it into the bush.
>
> Morning came. . . . Ijapa, he put a yam into his basket, then dropped a yam into the hole he had dug the night before. He put another yam into his basket and dropped another one into the hole. For each one he put in the basket he put another in the hole (I,2-22).

The narrator states three times that Ijapa steals one-half of what he harvests and this theft reveals disrespect rather than respect.

Secondly, Ijapa's verbal exchanges with the chief point to Ijapa's lack of humility in the chief's presence. In the beginning, Ijapa is careful to appear to be courteous. He addresses the chief respectfully as "great chief". The chief himself asserts his authority. He speaks first and his words are stern:

> The chief sent for Ijapa. He spoke sternly. 'Ijapa, it is reported that you have taken yams from my field.'
>
> Ijapa said: 'Oh, great chief, I came to help you with your harvest. I labored in the hot sun. I brought yams to your storehouse. Then I returned home. Now you reproach me. It is not I who has taken your yams.'
>
> The chief said: 'Ijapa, your habits are widely known, and in addition there is a path from my fields to your storehouse.'
>
> Ijapa said: 'Oh, sir, I went to your fields to work for you, I returned. Could this little walking have made a path? If there is such a path, it was made by others to discredit me. Were there not other persons in the fields also?'
>
> The chief said: 'There are no paths from my fields to their houses, only to yours. Therefore, suspicion falls on you. If you are innocent, we shall discover it. Let us prepare for the hot-water test. Tomorrow the people will assemble. We shall come to the truth of the matter' (I,37-56).

The chief maintains control in this exchange because he fails to credit Ijapa's arguments and instead orders him to take the hot water test. This assertiveness and control is again evident when the chief addresses the community:

> The next day the people gathered in front of the chief's house, where a large pot of water was heating over a fire. When the water began to boil, the chief said: 'Ijapa has been accused of stealing yams. He denies it. For this reason he will take the test. He will drink a bowl of the boiling water. If he is guilty, he will feel great pain. If he is innocent, he will not be harmed. In this way we shall know the truth. Let us begin' (I,57-64).

Again, the power of the chief is reflected in his statements, which are mainly in the imperative mood. He states four times what Ijapa will do and he concludes by giving the order to begin.

However, throughout the trial Ijapa's words demonstrate that he does not submit to the chief's authority. Ijapa's status change from a clearly guilty defendant to the chief's trusted advisor is reflected in the dialogue. In the beginning, even though Ijapa's fate is very uncertain, his dialogue exudes confidence. He proclaims his innocence and then requests that others face the ordeal as well:

> Ijapa spoke, saying, 'Oh, sir, though I will be proved innocent, you still will not know who has taken your yams. There were many persons there. Let them all be tested.'
>
> The chief considered it. He said: 'This is good advice. Let everyone who was in the fields take the test' (I,65-70).

Ijapa's request, however, is phrased as an order: "Let them all be tested". Moreover, instead of treating Ijapa's words as a request, the chief considers them to be advice. Hence Ijapa's role is now that of chief's advisor. The narrator then, in a redundant statement, voices a similar conclusion:

> Ijapa now became very helpful, as though he were the chief's assistant. He ordered that the pot be removed from the fire. 'Place it here,' he said, 'so that the chief may see it from where he sits.' They moved the pot of water from the fire as Ijapa directed.

> 'Because I am the youngest,' Ijapa said, 'it is I who should serve the water.'
>
> The chief agreed (I,71-78).

Ijapa's subsequent actions are thus redundant with the appelation "chief's assistant". Ijapa orders, directs, and finally asserts that he should serve the water.

Characterization in these tales is thus achieved through redundancies between character, appearance, action, and dialogue. In addition, redundancy is often apparent between a character and the setting in which he is found. In Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* the forest fauna is found in the forest; in *The seven mendicants* the inn-keeper is found in his inn; in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* and *The peasant's wise daughter* the monarchs are found in their palaces. Characters who lack status or identity also lack settings. In Yorubaland's *Oni and the great bird* Oni, like the drunkard and the opium-eater in the Burmese tale, is an outcast and all three of them are without settings. The drunkard and the opium-eater wander from rest-house to rest-house and Oni's peregrinations finally lead him to the village of Ajo. Similarly, in *The peasant's wise daughter* the queen's loss of status is accompanied by a change in setting. The king orders her to return to her peasant's hut.

One exception, in which there is a lack of redundancy between character and setting, is the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. In this tale the others view the vulture's setting as evidence of depravity: "Everybody regarded him as a vulgar ne'er-do-well, who was very ugly and spent all his time searching around the village rubbish dumps, or following bush fires" (T,29-32). This statement contains irony and lacks redundancy. It is ironic because the birds who denigrate the vulture because of his setting are found in the same places: "He still loiters around the village markets and rubbish dumps, or turns up at the bush fires where he is not welcomed by the others" (T,68-70). It lacks redundancy because the vulture is not a "vulgar ne'er-do-well". Thus, although this tale exhibits a lack of redundancy between a character and his setting, it nevertheless demonstrates that setting may be taken as evidence of an individual's character. Hence this tale also points out that setting and character can be redundant.

In addition to the redundancies apparent on the level of character, there are also redundancies on the level of the plot. Plot redundancies occur in the following instances: the same event happens to more than one character; the same event happens more than once to the same character; an event is both described and summarized; the same event is described more than once. As in character redundancies, the narrator plays a key role in constructing plot redundancies.

The most commonly applied technique for plot emphasis in the three groups of tales is simple, verbatim repetition. This is especially conspicuous in the cumulative tales from each group because each time the same event occurs, it is described in exactly the same terms by the narrator. For instance, in Burma's *The crow and the wren* the same event happens to eight different characters. The water, the pot, the mud, the buffalo, the grass, the land, the forest, and the fire are all asked to assist the crow. The same event also happens seven times to the same character: the crow is seven times assured of the other character's willingness to help on the condition that the crow first perform a service for that character. The crow's encounters with the grass and the land serve as examples of how the narrator uses the same language to describe the same event:

> 'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Grass and said:
>
> 'Grass, Grass, come with me,
> To feed the Buffalo,
> To wallow the Mud,
> To mend the Pot,
> To fetch the Water,
> To wash the Beak,
> To eat the little Wren.'
>
> 'I am willing to come,' replied the Grass, 'but the Buffalo is such a big eater, and he needs more of me. If you can give me some fresh land, I will grow more until there is enough of me for the Buffalo.'
>
> 'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Land and said:
>
> 'Land, Land, come with me,
> To grow the Grass,
> To feed the Buffalo,
> To wallow the Mud,
> To mend the Pot,
> To fetch the Water,
> To wash the Beak,
> To eat the little Wren.'
>
> 'I am willing to come,' replied the Land, 'but, as you see, I am covered with forest. How can the Grass grow on me, unless the forest is cleared?'
>
> 'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Forest (CW,54-81).

The sequence of each encounter is identical. The crow approaches first the grass, and then the land, with an invitation to accompany him. The wording, apart from the naming, is also identical: the phrase "come with me" occurs in each encounter and the last six lines beginning with "To feed the buffalo" are also the same. This is followed in each case by the other character's assertion of his willingness to comply with the crow's request. Both the grass and the land respond with the words "I am willing to come, but". Both characters set the crow a new task. The tasks vary and so does the language. The grass states: "'If you can give me some fresh land, I will grow more until there is enough of me for the Buffalo'" (CW,65-66). The land phrases his task as a question: "'How can the Grass grow on me, unless the forest is cleared?'" (CW,78-79). The final part of the sequence is again identical. The crow responds in each case with the words "All right" and flies away to the next character, and the whole sequence begins again.

A similar pattern occurs in Canada's *The louse and the flea.* The events and the language are repeated six times as the narrator describes the involvement of the door, the broom, the cart, the ash-heap, the tree, and the girl. Each time, a character asks another character why he is performing a particular activity. Next, the character who is questioned responds with the words "Have I not reason to. . . The little louse has burnt herself, the little flea is weeping. . ." Finally, the interrogator decides to join the fracas by beginning an activity, too.

The same redundancies are evident in the Yoruba *1400 cowries*. The pattern is repeated ten times: the address (repeated twice, as in *The crow and the wren*); the assertion that the character is in trouble and the reason for it; a summary of what has happened before; the claim that 1400 cowries is owed; the threat that non-compliance will anger the gods. The drummer's cry serves as an example:

> The king's son happened to see the drummer beating the woman, and he was very angry and beat the drummer too. As he beat him, the drummer started to wail:
>
> 'O prince, if you beat me the gods will bring trouble.
> Spare me, I beg you, and I will serve you for ever.
> I saw this bad woman ill-treating her baby,

> I saw the evil hawk stealing a hen's chicken,
> I saw the vicious hen pecking a poor woman,
> I saw the stump's mushroom stolen by her,
> I saw the tree stump destroy the hunter's shot,
> I saw the wounded roan stealing from the cotton tree,
> I saw the sharpened thorn pierce the cricket's body,
> I saw the drunken cricket start the trouble,
> For he owes for his wife and he owes for the wine;
> O prince, fourteen hundred is not much to ask,
> The gods will be angry if you do not pay up' (C,118-133).

Although the actual language varies slightly in each character's verse, the line "The gods will be angry if you do not pay up" is repeated verbatim ten times throughout this tale. As well, in his verse, the drummer's description of what he has seen is redundant with the actual events involving each prior character.

Verbatim repetition occurs in other tales as well. For instance, in Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater* both the drunkard and the opium-eater experience a night in the company of the ghosts and both arouse the ghosts' suspicions. Each time one ghost suspects the presence of a human being, another ghost suggests that they count themselves. The drunkard thus has occasion to use the same words on both of his visits: "'One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. All correct. All correct'" (D,24-26).

The narrator of the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* also indulges in verbatim repetition when he describes how Ijapa gets the community to bear witness for him:

> [Ijapa] carried [the calabash] to the chief, saying: 'See it, great chief, see how full the calabash is!'
>
> The chief replied: 'I see it. You do well, Ijapa.'
>
> Ijapa carried the calabash back and forth, saying, 'Family of the chief, see how full the calabash is!'
>
> The chief's family called out: 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!'

'Men of the village,' Ijapa chanted, 'see how full the calabash is!'

The men of the village called out: 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!'

'Women of the village,' Ijapa sang, 'see how full the calabash is!'

The women of the village answered: 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!'

'Boys of the village,' Ijapa chanted, 'see how full the calabash is!'

The boys chanted back: 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!'

'Girls of the village,' Ijapa chanted, 'see how full the calabash is!'

'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!' the girls replied (I,97-118).

Not only does the narrator allow Ijapa to say the same thing six times, but he himself follows the dialogue with a summary of his own:

> Ijapa showed his calabash of water to this one and that one, each in turn, as evidence of the large amount of hot water he would drink. They could see that Ijapa was not shrinking from the ordeal. But Ijapa spent a great deal of time at this business, and the entire village was constantly singing, 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!' (I,119-124).

The narrator's summary is thus redundant with the action and the dialogue. This kind of plot redundancy is also evident when the narrators describe the trick in *The seven mendicants* (Burma) and the riddle in *The peasant's wise daughter* (Canada). In the Burmese tale the narrator first describes how the six mendicants and the inn-keeper are tricked and then explains it (SM,8-25). In the Euro-Canadian tale the narrator first describes the state in which the peasant girl arrives before the king and then summarizes it with these words: "And when she arrived in that fashion, the King said she had guessed the riddle and fulfilled all the conditions" (P,46-48).

Plot redundancies also occur when a description is repeated. In Canada's *Little Briar-rose* the same event happens to more than one character when Briar-rose pricks her finger and causes everyone and everything in the palace to fall into a deep sleep. The narrator's description of this event is repeated three times in very similar language. He begins by describing the events immediately after Briar-rose pricks her finger:

> And, in the very moment when she felt the prick, she fell down upon the bed that stood there, and lay in a deep sleep. And this sleep extended over the whole palace; the King and Queen who had just come home, and had entered the great hall, began to go to sleep, and the whole of the court with them. The horses, too, went to sleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons upon the roof, the flies on the wall; even the fire that was flaming on the hearth became quiet and slept, the roast meat left off frizzling, and the cook, who was just going to pull the hair of the scullery boy, because he had forgotten something, let him go, and went to sleep. And the wind fell, and on the trees before the castle not a leaf moved again (L,48-59).

The narrator introduces redundancy within the passage itself: the description of each individual merely serves to elaborate the sentence "And this sleep extended over the whole palace" (L,49-50). Secondly, the same event happens to several characters: they all succumb to the spell. Moreover, the same event is described a second time when the prince enters through the hedge and the narrator repeats this entire description as seen through the prince's eyes:

> In the castle yard he saw the horses and the spotted hounds lying asleep; on the roof sat the pigeons with their heads under their wings. And when he entered the house, the flies were asleep upon the wall, the cook in the kitchen was still holding out his hand to seize the boy, and the maid was sitting by the black hen which she was going to pluck.
>
> He went on farther, and in the great hall he saw the whole of the court lying asleep, and up by the throne lay the King and Queen (L,86-94).

This description is provided a third time when, after she is kissed by the prince, Briar-rose wakes up, an event which subsequently stimulates the entire court to awaken as well.

Redundancies in plot description are also apparent in the Burmese and Yoruba tales. In Burma's *The seven mendicants* it is repeated twice that the inn-keeper was cheated by the youngest mendicant, the first time when the narrator states that the mendicant intends to cheat the inn-keeper (SM,6) and the second when the other six mendicants discover the sham: "'Master, we are sorry that you were cheated by the young rascal'" (SM,34). An example from the Yoruba tales occurs in *Oni and the great bird* when the narrator repeats four times in the course of eighteen lines that the bells ring:

> There were the sounds of many bells being rung and people seemed to be in a hurry. Oni tied up the canoe and climbed the bank, and as he did so he met an old man. 'Good evening, my friend, my name is Oni. I am a stranger to your town and have nowhere to spend the night, will you take me to your house?' Oni asked the old man.
>
> 'Yes, certainly, come along with me, but we must go quickly because the bells are ringing and it is growing dusk,' replied the old man.
>
> 'What is the name of your town and why do your people ring bells on the approach of darkness?' asked Oni.
>
> 'People call this place Ajo, but hurry up please, we must get indoors. I will explain the bells to you when we are inside,' replied the old man.
>
> When they reached the old man's house, they found his people waiting anxiously for him at the door. The bell had now stopped ringing (O,24-42).

Finally, foreshadowing and moralizing are also forms of redundancy. Examples of foreshadowing exist in tales from all three cultures. The narrator's introduction of Oni in the first section of the Yoruba tale *Oni and the great bird* foreshadows Oni's fate in the second section of the tale. When Oni is born, he is strange (O,1), and in his birthplace he contributes to society by participating in battle. Oni is also invincible and he so frightens his people that they try to kill him. Finally, Oni is banished from his birthplace. Thus, in this section, the narrator presents the unresolved problem of the individual establishing his place in society. In the second part of the tale, the narrator repeats the problem: when Oni arrives in Ajo, he is a stranger; he proves that he is invincible by killing Anodo, and his challenge to Anodo frightens the old man's people; Oni is removed from Ajo society when he is thrown into Anodo's path and when he disappears after killing Anodo. The loss of identity in the first section therefore foreshadows a similar loss in the second section. However, the situation is resolved in the second part when Oni proves his identity and is rewarded by society. Moreover, the old man's description of Anodo foreshadows that character's appearance. The old man tells Oni: "'For many years now we, the people of Ajo, have been troubled by the nightly arrival of a giant eagle. We call it Anodo. It always appears on the approach of darkness and stays until the approach of dawn'" (O,45-48). Then the narrator reports that "the old man had hardly finished speaking before Oni heard the sound of great wings flapping over the house" (O,57-58). The appearance of Anodo is thus redundant with the description that preceded him.

In addition, foreshadowing (and thus redundancy) occurs in many other tales when characters predict their accomplishments. The drunkard in the Burmese tale first announces that he will find the cure for the opium-eater's nose (D,68-70) and then accomplishes the feat (D,86-92). Not given to idle boasting, whenever the fox in the Euro-Canadian tale says that he will fetch something to eat, he does. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* Ijapa repeatedly and accurately predicts that he will be found innocent. (Ironically, in the same tale the chief predicts that he will uncover the truth (I,56) and he never does.) Foreshadowing also occurs in *Little Briar-rose* when the frog predicts the birth of Briar-rose, and when the twelfth wise woman states that

Briar-rose, at the age of fifteen years, will prick her finger on a spindle and fall into a deep sleep of 100 years' duration.

A final type of plot redundancy occurs in two Yoruba tales when the narrators conclude their tales with morals. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* the narrator supplies a proverb which is redundant with the actions described in the course of the telling:

> Since then, whenever a person tries to absolve himself of a bad action by putting the fault on others, people say:
>
> 'When Ijapa accuses the whole community,
> He himself must have something to hide' (I,143-146).

The narrator of *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* similarly summarizes the tale events in his moral: "Even the most despised are capable of doing good, and they are not always rewarded by their fellow men for their pains" (T,73-74).

In conclusion, this chapter reveals that coherence in these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales is achieved in the same manner. All of these tales are characterized by clear, single-stranded, and episodic plot lines. In addition, an omniscient and reliable narrator actively intrudes with explanations, evaluations, and general comments. The narrator's intrusions, together with the characters' attributes, actions, and dialogues, produce tales which are heavily redundant. This redundancy, combined with the clarity of the plot line, produces a tale structure which is both direct and clear, and hence coherent. This coherence in narrative structure means that the messages in the tales are transmitted simply and directly, and with a minimum of interference. Moreover, because these tales achieve coherence in the same manner, the tales from the three groups make similar communicative demands of their audiences. Hence, the audiences for these tales can use similar reading or listening strategies to decode the messages in the tales. This suggests that these tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland can be used interchangeably with the same audience.

CHAPTER SIX

LANGUAGE

> **Readability** [is the] ease of understanding or comprehension because of style of writing. . . Many variables in text may contribute to readability, such as format, typography, content, literary form and style, vocabulary difficulty, sentence complexity, idea or proposition density, cohesiveness. . . Many variables within the reader also contribute, such as motivation, abilities, and interests.[1]

Chapter six, the second of two chapters focussing on tale structure, studies the language of these tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland. The analysis involves the assessment of vocabulary difficulty and sentence complexity, and the study of imagery and other structural features, such as verse, song, and formulas. This chapter aims to establish, through the study of language, the readability level of these tales. It determines from the Fry readability scale that the Yoruba tales are easier to read than the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales. In addition, this chapter reveals that all three groups of folktales make extensive use of visual imagery and figurative language. Various figures of thought, speech, and sound, and various structural features, such as song, verse, and formulas, enhance these tales and contribute to a generally high degree of readability. Finally, this chapter concludes with the observation that these folktales would appear to achieve a high degree of listening comprehension as well.

---

[1] "Readability." *A dictionary of reading and related terms*, ed. by Theodore L. Harris and Richard E. Hodges (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, c1981), 262.

THE FRY READABILITY SCALE

Edward Fry, an American scholar, originally developed his readability scale to assist teachers of English-as-a-Second-Language in assessing the level of difficulty of the reading material given to Ugandan students.[1] Fry's readability formula uses word and sentence length as predictors of reading difficulty. The application of this formula to a piece of writing requires its users to ascertain the average number of syllables and sentences in three randomly-selected passages of 100 words. The average of the three samples is then plotted on Fry's graph to determine the approximate grade level of the work. This technique was applied to these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba folktales. It established, as Table 18 on page 174 shows, that the tales used in this study are not excessively difficult.

The Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales appear to be written at a junior high level: the Burmese tales range from grade six to grade nine; the Euro-Canadian tales range from grade six to grade eight. The Yoruba tales, which range from grade four to grade seven, appear to be written at an upper elementary level. Furthermore, the Burmese tales have a mode of 7, the Euro-Canadian tales are bimodal--two tales at the grade 7 level and two at the grade 8 level--and the Yoruba tales have a mode of 6. These results are, of course, heavily predicated on the specific versions of the tales. This analysis thus provides very little insight into the readability level of other translations or of the original versions of these tales. However, this is not a significant drawback if one's intent is to assess the readability of the material at hand in order to determine a suitable audience for the tale. Table 18 reveals that the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales tend to be slightly less readable than the Yoruba tales. This suggests that these tales are suitable for more advanced students than are the Yoruba tales.[1]

---

[1] Edward Fry, "Fry's readability graph: clarifications, validity, and extension to Level 17," *Journal of Reading*, 21 no.3 (December 1977): 243.

TABLE 18

LEVEL OF TALE DIFFICULTY BASED ON THE FRY READABILITY SCALE

BURMA		CANADA		YORUBALAND	
Tale	Grade	Tale	Grade	Tale	Grade
The crow and the wren	6	Little Briar-rose	8	1400 cowries	6
The drunkard and the opium-eater	7	The louse and the flea	6	Ijapa and the hot water test	4
The rabbit has a cold	7	The peasant's wise daughter	8	Oni and the great bird	7
The seven mendicants	9	The sole	7	Taking a sacrifice to heaven	6
Why the vulture is bald	7	The wolf and the fox	7		

---

[1] Such a conclusion must be tempered, of course, with the realization that folktales are multi-layered. This feature of folktales means that stories characterized by a simple vocabulary are not necessarily unsuitable resources for advanced students because such students may in fact read the tales at a deeper level. Teachers using readability scales must therefore be mindful of the precise function the tale is intended to perform in the classroom.

IMAGERY

> **Imagery** . . . . is one of the most common [terms] in modern criticism, and one of the most ambiguous. . . . Three uses of the word, however, are especially frequent:
>
> (1) 'Imagery' (that is, 'images' taken collectively) is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literal description, by allusion, or in the analogues (the *vehicles*) used in its similes and metaphors. . . . The term 'image' should not be taken to imply a visual reproduction of the object referred to; some readers of the passage experience visual images and some do not; and among those who do, the explicitness and detail of the mind-pictures vary greatly. Also, imagery includes auditory, tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), or kinesthetic (sensations of movement), as well as visual qualities. . . .
>
> (2) Imagery is used, more narrowly, to signify only descriptions of visible objects and scenes, especially if the description is vivid and particularized . . . .
>
> (3) Most commonly, imagery is used to signify *figurative language*, especially the vehicles of metaphors and similes.[1]

In *The European folktale: form and nature* Max Lüthi points out that the folktale "does not seek empathetically to recreate the concrete world with its many dimensions" (1982:24). He argues that vivid and particularized descriptions are not characteristic of the folktale:

> The European folktale is not addicted to description. When it has its hero set off in search of his brother and sister and come upon a town made of iron, it does not waste a single word describing the iron buildings. . . .
>
> Only what is essential to the plot is mentioned; nothing is stated for its own sake, and nothing is amplified. As a rule only one attribute goes with each noun: a town made all of iron, a big house, a big dragon, the young king, a bloody struggle. Thanks to this true epic technique of merely naming things, everything that is named appears as a definitively understood unit. Any attempt at detailed description gives rise to the feeling that only a fraction of all that could be said has in fact been told. A detailed description lures us into the infinite and shows us the elusive depth of things. Mere naming, on the other hand, automatically transforms things into simple, motionless images. The

---

[1] M.H. Abrams, *A glossary of literary terms*, 76-77.

> world is captured in the word; there is no tentative amplification that would make us feel that something has been left out. The brief labels isolate things by giving them sharp outlines. · Not only human beings and otherworld beings, but also all the objects and places of the folktale are designated in this way. The forest in which the folktale hero loses his way is always simply named, never described. The Grimm brothers lose touch with the style of the genuine folktale when they speak of the red eyes and wagging head of the witch and of her long bespectacled nose . . . Genuine folktales only speak of an 'ugly old hag,' an 'old witch,' an 'evil witch,' or simply an 'old woman' . . . . the folktale consistently foregoes any individualizing characterization (1982:25-26).

Such brief labels as an "ugly old hag", an "old witch", or an "old woman" are primarily visual in orientation. Similarly, the "regular accessories" identified by Lüthi (gems and pearls; metal rings, keys, or bells; golden gowns and apples; golden and silver pears, nuts, or flowers; tools of glass; golden spinning wheels (1982:27)) also appeal primarily to the sense of sight.

A study of the imagery in these folktales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland reveals that the Burmese tales are less addicted to description than are the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. Although the tales within each group provide varying amounts of descriptive detail, the Burmese tales avoid the extraneous details and long descriptive passages that occur in some of the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba stories. Secondly, the range of everyday objects and characters varies between the three groups of tales. However, this study does reveal great similarity between the three groups with respect to the type of description present. The narrators of, and the characters in, these tales rely predominantly on their visual senses and hence the images presented to the audience are mainly, although not exclusively, visual.

In *The European folktale: form and nature* Lüthi remarks that "in the true folktale each individual character is significant to the story line" (1982:29) and that these characters "not only lack a geographical and personal frame of reference; they also lack a material environment. The gifts they receive are not everyday possessions but merely flash upon the scene when the plot calls for them. Whenever the story requires, at specific turning points, they show up without fail" (1982:31). This point is reiterated by Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the folktale* when he mentions that his morphological study of the tale shows "that [the folktale] contains very little pertaining to everyday life" (1968:106), and when he asserts that "the employment of a magical agent follows its receipt by the hero; or, if the agent received is a living creature, its help is directly put to use on the command of the hero" (1968:50). It might well be argued, then, that the primary appeal of the tangible objects and characters appearing in the folktale is an intangible quality--their potential utility--and that other aspects are of secondary importance. This would seem to be the case in these folktales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland, in which elements extraneous to the plot do not, for the most part, appear.[1]

True to Lüthi's assertion, the characters of these tales tend to lack the normal possessions of quotidien existence. Many of the characters do not even have roofs over their heads. The ordinary objects that do appear function in extraordinary ways. For instance, the king's plates in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* are noteworthy not because they are useful kitchen implements, but rather because an insufficient number of them causes the king to offend the thirteenth wise woman: "as he had only twelve golden plates for them to eat out of, one of [the wise women] had to be left at home" (L.12-13).

---

[1] The rare exceptions occur in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. When the narrator of Canada's *Little Briar-rose* describes the scene after Briar-rose has pricked her finger, he lists many characters and objects (horses, dogs, flies, the fire, roast meat, the cook, the scullery boy (L,52-59)) that are not essential for plot development. There is also no real reason for the mention of bread and water in *The peasant's wise daughter*. Similarly, in the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* the mat and the cloth (O,61-63) are not required by the plot.

Other common objects serving exotic functions include the spindle in *Little Briar-rose* and the pestle in Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater*. The spindle is important not as a device for spinning cloth (after all, the king orders the burning of all spindles in his kingdom (L.28-30)), but as the instrument by which the twelfth wise woman's prophecy is fulfilled. The pestle in the Burmese tale is used not for grinding, but for shortening the opium-eater's nose. In Burma's *The seven mendicants* the youngest mendicant uses the conch shell to confuse his masters and the inn-keeper, thus providing for himself an opportunity to steal 600 pieces of silver:

> The Youngest Mendicant, as he listened to the words of his Elders, thought out a trick to cheat them of the money, and so he left their conch shell on a bench. Then the Mendicants walked away, but when they reached the Inn gate, the Youngest Mendicant, saying that he had forgotten to bring the conch shell, turned and went back. Entering the Inn and quietly taking the conch shell, he said to the Inn-Keeper, 'Sir, my masters have changed their mind, and now they want to take away with them the bag containing the silver pieces.' . . . . The Inn-Keeper went to the door and shouted to the Mendicants, 'Masters, shall I give it to him?' The Six Mendicants, waiting impatiently at the gate, shouted back, 'Please give it to him, for we are in a hurry.' The Inn-Keeper then gave the bag to the Youngest Mendicant. Of course, the Six Mendicants thought that the Inn-Keeper was referring to the conch shell, and the Inn-Keeper thought that they were referring to the bag (SM,5-25).

In like manner, the objects appearing in the Yoruba tales also function in unusual ways. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* Ijapa dupes his judges with a calabash of water; the basket in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* is used to convey a ram to heaven; the bells in *Oni and the great bird* warn of the approach of the supernatural eagle, Anodo.

Although the tales from all three cultures employ objects in similar ways--that is, to fulfill plot functions--the range of those objects differs between the three groups of tales. Many of the figures and objects appearing in a given tale are specific to that tale's source culture. For instance, tropical elements do not appear in the Euro-Canadian tales. The leopard in Yorubaland's *Ijapa and the hot water test,* the lion and the monkey in Burma's *The rabbit has a cold,* and the vultures in Burma's *Why the vulture is bald* and Yorubaland's *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* are all tropical species.[1] Neither they, nor the ega and ologiri (weavers and whydahs) in the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven,* appear in any of the Euro-Canadian tales. The respectable mendicants and the village headman in Burma's *The seven mendicants,* the chief in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test,* and the palm-wine seller in the Yoruba *1400 cowries* follow ordinary, but culturally defined, occupations, and hence these figures do not surface in the Euro-Canadian tales. The conch shell in Burma's *The seven mendicants,* the cotton trees in Yorubaland's *1400 cowries* and *Oni and the great bird,* the calabash in *Ijapa and the hot water test,* and the cowry shells in *1400 cowries* are all marine or tropical objects.

Similarly, the crops grown in the tales are culture- and climate-specific: corn, which is native to North America, appears in *The peasant's wise daughter;* opium is grown in Burma and appears in *The drunkard and the opium-eater;* the yams and palm wine mentioned in *Ijapa and the hot water test* and *1400 cowries* are grown and produced in Yorubaland. Even the buildings differ. One of the farmhouses in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* has a cellar and the old woman's compound in *1400 cowries* is typical of Yorubaland. These edifices also serve different functions in the three groups of tales. The majority of the Euro-Canadian tales, in contrast to the Burmese and Yoruba tales, are set indoors. The characters of the Euro-Canadian tales are thus more cut off from nature than are the Burmese and Yoruba characters.

---

[1] Vultures are found in tropical and temperate zones. Although vultures do exist in Canada, there are no vultures in the tales selected for this study. That vultures do not occur in these tales does not mean that there are no vultures in Canadian folklore.

There are also, of course, exceptions, in which the same objects or characters appear in the tales from different cultures. Kings and kingdoms appear in all three groups of tales, and vultures are the protagonists in the Burmese and Yoruba etiological tales. In addition, the king in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* seeks a pestle to increase his wealth, and in Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the opium-eater uses a pestle to shorten his nose. Arrows are mentioned in Canada's *The sole* and Yorubaland's *Oni and the great bird.* Interestingly, these overlapping objects are all traditional utensils and weapons and hence do not necessarily indicate similarities in the modern cultures.

Although the objects of sense perception presented in these folktales tend to vary according to the source cultures, in all three groups of tales it is the visual aspect of these objects which holds the greatest appeal both for the narrators and for their characters. Time and again the narrators of these folktales refer to what their characters have seen. For instance, the narrator of the Burmese tale *The drunkard and the opium-eater* describes how the villagers react when they notice the opium-eater's altered appearance: "As the two friends walked through the village, all the villagers roared with laughter to see the three-yard long nose of the Opium-eater" (D,65-68). Their attention is caught by the sight of a unique proboscis. The sight of the soaring vulture also captures the attention of the community in the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven:* "Everybody watched him as his great wings carried him slowly away and he became a tiny speck high up in the blue sky" (T,48-50).

That the characters in these tales depend mostly on their sense of sight is strikingly apparent in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* when the narrator describes a scene from the prince's perspective. The prince's impressions on entering the palace a century after Briar-rose has pricked her finger are primarily visual:

> When the King's son came near to the thorn-hedge, it was nothing but large and beautiful flowers, which parted from each other of their own accord, and let him pass unhurt, then they closed again behind him like a hedge. In the castle yard he saw the horses and the spotted hounds lying asleep; on the roof sat the pigeons with their heads under their wings. And when he entered the house, the flies were asleep upon the wall, the cook in the kitchen was still holding out his hand to seize the boy, and the maid was sitting by the black hen which she was going to pluck.
>
> He went on farther, and in the great hall he saw the whole of the court lying asleep, and up by the throne lay the King and Queen.
>
> Then he went on still farther, and all was so quiet that a breath could be heard, and at last he came to the tower, and opened the door into the little room where Briar-rose was sleeping. There she lay, so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away (L,82-98).

In a passage that defies the assertion that the folktale avoids description, the narrator illustrates that the prince is primarily aware of visual sensation. Unlike his would-be predecessors, the prince does not feel the thorns of the hedge; his sense of touch is not activated. Once inside the courtyard, he is struck by what he sees. There is one brief reference to the silence, which serves to emphasize the lack of auditory stimuli: he does not hear anything.

This over-reliance on the sense of sight is most vividly illustrated in the Yoruba tale *Ijapa and the hot water test.* During his trial, Ijapa appeals to the visual perception of his witnesses:

> Ijapa showed his calabash of water to this one and that one, each in turn, as evidence of the large amount of hot water he would drink. They could see that Ijapa was not shrinking from the ordeal. But Ijapa spent a great deal of time at this business, and the entire village was constantly singing, 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!' (I,119-124).

Finally, after Ijapa drinks the water, he refers again to what his judges have seen:

> Ijapa said: 'You have seen it. I did not cry out. Tears did not come from my eyes. How then can I be guilty?' And as an additional proof of his innocence, Ijapa jumped into the pot from which the water had come. The water in the pot also was cool. Ijapa made sounds of pleasure. Then he came out. He said to the chief: 'As you see, it was not I who committed the crime. Surely it must be Opolo, and Ekute, and Ewure, and Ekun, and Agbonrin who are guilty, for it was they who felt the pain' (I,130-139).

In both instances Ijapa deliberately manipulates his judges' sensual awareness. The large calabash on view to the community may well be evidence of the large amount of water Ijapa will drink, but it certainly is not evidence at all of the amount of *hot* water he will drink. The temperature of the water can best be determined through the sense of touch. By stressing their vision, Ijapa blinds his audience to the other aspects of sense perception. The chief's subsequent acquittal of the guilty Ijapa lacks insight, defies common sense, and demonstrates the inadequacy of the "seeing is believing" philosophy of life.

Nevertheless, when objects and characters are described (and in many instances they are not[1]), it is their visual qualities that are emphasized.

---

[1] Apart from gender, the physical appearances of the rabbit in Burma's *The rabbit has a cold,* and the inn-keeper and the Princess Learned-in-the-Law in *The seven mendicants* are unknown. Similarly, the king, the queen, and the

Frequently, characters and objects are briefly described with universal and vague terms that usually stress beauty, age, or size--all qualities that can be visualized. For example, the inn-keeper's daughter in Burma's *The seven mendicants* is a "beautiful young woman" (SM,43-44), as is Briar-rose in the Euro-Canadian tale (L,31-33). The thief in Burma's *The seven mendicants* is the "youngest" mendicant and the Yoruba trickster, Ijapa, is permitted to serve the water at his trial because he is the youngest (I,76-77). Old women and old men appear in *Little Briar-rose* (Canada), and in *1400 cowries* (Yorubaland) and *Oni and the great bird* (Yorubaland).

In addition to beauty and age, tales from each group also stress size. The wren in the Burmese *The crow and the wren* says that her daughter is "little" (CW,3), an adjective which is also applied to seven of the eight characters in Canada's *The louse and the flea*. In the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* Anodo's outstanding characteristic is his size. The old man calls him a "giant eagle" (O,45-46) and several subsequent references are made to his great size. In *Ijapa and the hot water test* Ijapa demands a large calabash. The louse and the flea and the queen in *The peasant's wise daughter* all live in little houses. All of these terms--beautiful, young, old, little, great--are universal, but very imprecise, concepts. No effort, for instance, is made to supply Anodo's dimensions or to specify what is beautiful about the inn-keeper's daughter or Briar-rose. Without such specifics one cannot determine what the normative standards are in the tales. It therefore becomes impossible to distinguish whether or not these tales interpret these subjective terms in different ways.

---

thirteenth wise woman in Canada's *Little Briar-rose*, the monarchs in *The peasant's wise daughter*, and the chief in Yorubaland's *Ijapa and the hot water test* are unrecognizable individuals.

The only exception to this involves the vultures of the Burmese and Yoruba etiological tales. In both cases the bald vulture is regarded as an ugly bird.

Sometimes the objects and characters have distinctive colours: in Burma's *The seven mendicants* the characters find and seek a golden mortar and a golden pestle; the plates in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* are also golden (L,12); the fox in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* is red in colour (WF,5); the cotton tree in the Yoruba *1400 cowries* is green (C,37-38). The queen in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* wraps the king in a "fair white linen cloth" (P,99).

Very occasionally, precise details are given. In the Burmese tale the opium-eater's nose is exactly three yards long (D,60); the sole in the Euro-Canadian tale is "flat" (S,17) and has "a mouth on one side" (S,21). Longer, more detailed descriptions, however, occur only in the Yoruba and Euro-Canadian tales. In Yorubaland's *Oni and the great bird* Oni's appearance is, on different occasions, explicitly described. He looks strange because he was born wearing a pair of boots (O,1-2). Later in the story, when Oni appears to claim his reward for killing Anodo, the narrator describes his dishevelled state: "A very bedraggled figure then appeared, his clothes were torn and one of his boots was missing. It was Oni" (O,162-164). Furthermore, the narrator of Canada's *Little briar-rose* also devotes much attention to detail:

> So she went round into all sorts of places, looked into rooms and bed-chambers just as she liked, and at last came to an old tower. She climbed up the narrow winding-staircase, and reached a little door. A rusty key was in the lock, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there in a little room sat an old woman (L,36-41).

Again, the particularities attached to the tower, the staircase, the door, and the key are primarily visual qualities.

In contrast, the following passage from the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* describes not only how the birds look, but also how they move:

> The ega thought his gold and black plumage the most beautiful of any, and he was far too restless and noisy to work for others, for, when he was not building nests, he was pulling down his old ones. The little red-billed ologiri was far too busy hopping daintily about inside the houses and on the verandas and being very sociable to everybody. The olokoshe was mating, and was very conspicuous because of his beautiful long tail and his magnificent black and white plumage; he was too occupied flitting after his wife to be troubled with sacrifices (T,16-25).

The narrator supplies kinesthetic images when he remarks on the characteristic behaviour of the various species: the ega constructs and demolishes nests; the ologiri hops about daintily; the olokoshe flits after his wife.

Many other tales also comment on the kinesthetic qualities of the characters. The vulture in Burma's *Why the vulture is bald* struts; the pike in Canada's *The sole* darts away like an arrow (S,12-13); the different characters in *The louse and the flea* take up a variety of actions: the louse falls into the brew; the broom sweeps; the cart runs; the ash-heap burns; the tree shakes; the girl breaks the water pitcher; and the spring flows. In *Little Briar-rose* the princess is intrigued by the movement of the spindle: "'What sort of thing is that, that rattles round so merrily?'" (L,44). Like the fish in *The sole* who are distinguished by their speed, the wolf and the fox contrast sharply with each other because their kinesthetic qualities differ markedly. The wolf is clumsy (WF,11), limps after being beaten (WF,14), tears down the pancakes, and finally gets stuck fast in the cellar (WF,55). The fox, on the other hand, slips, sniffs, snatches (WF,22-24), runs (WF,45), jumps (WF,52), and, in contrast to the immobile wolf, bounds into the forest (WF,56-56). Finally, in the Yoruba

Oni and the great bird Anodo is noteworthy not only for his size (a visual quality), but also for his deliberate and powerful motion (a kinesthetic quality):

> As they threw Oni out into the road, Anodo swooped down and seizing him in his talons drew him upwards. Oni slashed the eagle in the chest with his knife and the eagle dropped him with a scream. Oni fell to the ground, dazed. He picked himself up as the huge bird descended once again. He had time to use his bow and discharge an arrow into Anodo before the wounded bird beat him to the ground with his great wings and pecked him severely. Again Oni's knife tore at the eagle, and he buried it twice in Anodo. Slowly the eagle beat his great wings and rose slowly into the air, then he hovered for a last terrible dive on Oni. Oni watched him and, putting an arrow in his bow, took aim. The great bird hovered, then with a terrible noise he tore down on the boy, gathering speed as he came. There was a great roar of wind as he came down. Oni discharged a second arrow, then another and another in quick succession, but still the bird came on. A moment later it had hit Oni and knocked him over. . . . Its great wings swept the boy to one side, and it plunged on into a cotton tree, which snapped like a twig, and came crashing down to bury the eagle and Oni under a mass of leaves (O,119-143).

The narrator uses specific verbs to illustrate the varied nature and power of Anodo's movements. The huge bird swoops, seizes, descends, pecks, hovers, tears down, and finally, crashes into a cotton tree.

Various other qualities--gustatory, tactile, olfactory--also receive attention in these folktales. In most instances, however, these qualities, which appeal to senses other than sight, are nevertheless visualized. For example, although the trial in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* focusses on the defendants' gustatory and tactile perceptions of the water, their reactions are auditory and visual:

> Opolo drank. The hot water burned him inside. He cried out in pain. Ijapa filled the bowl again. He presented it to Ekute the bush rat. Ekute drank. The water scalded his mouth. He cried out. Tears came to his eyes. Ijapa refilled the bowl and handed it to Ewure the goat. Ewure drank. He cried. Ijapa gave hot water to Ekun the leopard. Ekun drank. He moaned in pain, and tears flowed from his eyes (I,80-87).

The accused all cry. Their reactions thus appeal primarily to the audience's auditory and visual senses. Similarly, when Oni sings that Anodo's talons "are sharper than knives" (O,106), he refers to a tactile trait which he has observed: Anodo's talons look sharp; Oni has not yet felt them.

Auditory images are also important in these tales. The vulture in the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* sings in a great voice (T,35); the king in the Yoruba *1400 cowries* sings in a shaking voice (C,154); the bells ring to warn of Anodo in *Oni and the great bird*. In the Burmese tales the wren wails (CW,2) and King Lion roars in anger (R,17). In Canada's *The wolf and the fox* the wolf howls; the sole and the flea scream; and the spindle in *Little Briar-rose* rattles. As well, auditory and visual images often occur simultaneously. The description of the storm in the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* supplies both visual and auditory images:

> Not long after he disappeared from sight, a great wind arose, and then the sky became dark and heavy with rain clouds. Rain began to fall, to the accompaniment of great peals of thunder and flashes of lightning. So heavy were the rains that the dry, stony river beds soon became raging torrents, and flooded the countryside (T,51-56).

In addition, Anodo's impact on the environment in *Oni and the great bird* is both auditory and visual. Anodo first appears as a sound in the night: "Oni heard the sound of great wings flapping over the house. It sounded like a great wind, and the windows and doors shook in their frames" (O,57-60). Thus, Oni not only hears the eagle's approach, but he also sees its effects when he observes the vibrations of the windows and doors.

The most infrequently aroused sense in these tales is the sense of smell. The fox in the Euro-Canadian *The wolf and the fox* discovers the location of the pancakes by sniffing about (WF,23). The sense of smell also assumes prominence in two Burmese tales, *The drunkard and the opium-eater* and *The rabbit has a cold.* The ghosts in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* distinguish between themselves and humans through the sense of smell: "One of the ghosts then looked round and said, 'I smell human flesh. I suspect the presence of a stranger'" (D,20-22). Nevertheless, the specific smell is not described and the ghosts do not rely solely on this sense. They verify their suspicions by examining the opium-eater: "When they saw that he was a human being, they pulled his nose until it became full three yards long" (D,58-60). The olfactory sense is also appealed to in *The rabbit has a cold.* King Lion asks what sort of smell issues from his royal mouth, and is insulted when told that it is a foul smell, and angered when told that it is a sweet smell.

In summary, this section deals with two aspects of imagery: the objects and qualities of sense perception, and description. It reveals that there is a great deal of flexibility with respect to the amount of descriptive detail in these tales.[1] The range of objects varies between the three groups, but the type of description they receive does not. Although a wide variety of senses are activated, it is the visual qualities of various elements which hold the greatest appeal for the characters and the narrators. The following section will now focus on the third aspect of imagery: figurative language.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

> **Figurative language** deviates from what we apprehend as the standard significance or sequence of words, in order to achieve special meaning or effect. **Literal language**, in its broadest sense, is

---

[1] This observation does not necessarily refute Lüthi's statement that nothing is amplified in the European folktale because Lüthi himself notes that the Grimm tales indulge in extraneous description (1982:25).

> distinguished from all figurative language, and signifies entire accordance with standard usage; in a more limited sense, 'literal language' is distinguished only from the use of metaphors and other 'tropes' . . . Figures were for long characterized as 'ornaments' of literal language, but they are entirely integral to the functioning of language, and in fact indispensable, not only to poetry, but to all modes of fluid discourse.
>
> Since classical times figurative language has often been divided into two classes: (1) 'figures of thought,' or **tropes** (meaning 'turns,' 'conversions'), in which words are used in a way that effects a decided change or extension in their standard meaning; and (2) 'figures of speech,' or 'rhetorical figures,' in which the departure from standard usage is not, primarily, in the meaning but in the order and rhetorical effect of the words. This distinction is not a sharp one, nor do all critics agree in its application.[1]

A study of language in these tales reveals that the use of figurative language in the Yoruba and Euro-Canadian tales is more extensive and more varied than in the Burmese tales. Nevertheless, the most predominant figures of thought, speech, and sound--metaphor, personification, irony, alliteration, and assonance--are prominent in the tales from all three cultures.

Metaphor

> In a **metaphor** a word which in standard (or literal) usage denotes one kind of thing, quality, or action is applied to another, in the form of a statement of identity instead of comparison. For example, if Burns had said 'O my love is a red, red rose' he would have used, technically speaking, a metaphor instead of a simile. . . . It should be noted that . . . metaphors can be analyzed into two elements. In a usage now widely adopted, I.A. Richards introduced the term **tenor** for the subject to which the metaphoric word is applied . . . and the term **vehicle** for the metaphoric word itself . . . . In an **implicit metaphor** the tenor is not stated, but is implied by the verbal context; thus, if one says 'That reed was too frail to survive the storm of its sorrows,' the context indicates that 'reed' is the vehicle for an unstated tenor, a human being. All the metaphoric words cited so far have been nouns, but other parts of speech may also be used metaphorically. The

---

[1] Abrams, 60.

metaphoric use of a verb occurs in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (V.i.54), 'How sweet the moonlight *sleeps* upon this bank'[1]

However, metaphor is not simply the contrived effect of such literary giants as Shakespeare. Rather, M.H. Abrams asserts that figures are "entirely integral to the functioning of language" (1971:60). This assertion is echoed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors we live by:*

> Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish--a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (1980:3).

Lakoff and Johnson use time as an example of how metaphor pervades ordinary language:

> TIME IS MONEY, TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE, and TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY are all metaphorical concepts. They are metaphorical since we are using our everyday experiences with money, limited resources, and valuable commodities to conceptualize time. This isn't a necessary way for human beings to conceptualize time; it is tied to our culture. There are cultures where time is none of these things (1980:8-9).

Max Lüthi writes in *The fairytale as art form and portrait of man* that formal metaphors of the type mastered by Shakespeare occur rather infrequently in the European folktale: "one has to look for metaphors--at least living, striking ones--with a magnifying glass" (1984:111). This observation applies equally well to these folktales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland. The only example of the formal use of metaphor in these tales occurs in the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird.* Oni compares the eagle's talons to a universal, concrete, and man-made product--knives: "'The eagle, whose talons are sharper than knives, / For now the knives of nature and man will meet'" (O,106-107). Embedded in the second line is an implicit metaphor. The phrase "knives of nature" refer to an unstated tenor--Anodo's claws.

---

[1] Abrams, 61.

There are in these tales, however, numerous examples demonstrating that the literal language of the tales is inherently metaphoric. Several of the metaphoric expressions identified by Lakoff and Johnson occur in these tales. For example, the "time is money" metaphor occurs in one tale from Burma, three tales from Yorubaland, but, rather ironically, not in any of the tales from Canada.[1] In Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater* the drunkard spends the night at the cemetery rest-house (D,11,41). In the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the birds of the community dismiss the vulture because he "spen[ds] all his time searching around the village rubbish dumps" (T,30-31). The same phrase occurs twice in *Oni and the great bird*, once when Oni decides to stay overnight in Ajo (O,23-24) and a second time when he asks the old man for one night's lodging: "'I am a stranger to your town and have nowhere to spend the night, will you take me to your house?'" (O,28-30). Because Ijapa "spen[ds] a great deal of time" (I,122-123) showing his calabash of water to the entire village, the water in the calabash cools before he drinks it.

The "time is a moving object" metaphor identified by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:42) occurs in the tales from all three cultures. In *The drunkard*

---

[1] This is a commonly employed metaphor in English-speaking countries and in Canadian society. That this metaphor does not occur in these translated Euro-Canadian tales may simply be the result of the small sample size used in this study. Its absence emphasizes that it would be unwise to assume that story elements necessarily correspond to the societal practices of the cultures in which the tales are told.

and the opium-eater the ghosts vacate the rest-house "with the coming of dawn" (D,94). Time is also animate in *The seven mendicants:* "Time passed, and the little girl grew up into a beautiful young woman" (SM,43-44). In Canada's *Little Briar-rose* the frog tells the queen that "before a year has gone by, [she] shall have a daughter" (L,5-6). Similar phrases occur in *The peasant's wise daughter* and such Yoruba tales as *Ijapa and the hot water test* and *Oni and the great bird.*

A third example demonstrating that the ordinary language in these tales is intrinsically metaphoric is the container metaphor in which states of mind are regarded as vessels.[1] In the Burmese *The crow and the wren* the narrator states that "the Crow in great joy flew back towards the Forest" (CW,107-108), and that, after dropping the fire, "the Crow flew home in disgust" (CW,111-112). Similar phrases occur in *The drunkard and the opium-eater* and *The seven mendicants.* In the former, the drunkard uses such a phrase when he attempts to elicit information from the ghosts: "'Out of sheer curiosity, I want to know whether that nose will ever be the right length again'" (D,86-87). In the latter tale, the inn-keeper "exclaimed in surprise" (SM,14) when asked by the youngest mendicant to return the 600 silver pieces. Similar phrases occur in the Euro-Canadian *Little Briar-rose:* after the birth of his daughter, "the King could not contain himself for joy" (L,8). Upon awakening from their 100 year-long sleep, everyone "looked at each other in great astonishment" (L,103-104). When Opolo the frog drinks his portion of the boiling water in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test,* he "[cries] out in pain" (I,80-81) and when Ekun the leopard is given his portion, he "moan[s] in pain" (I,86).

---

[1] This metaphor is also discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:30-32).

One final prevalent type of metaphor recurring in these tales is the "more of form is more of content" metaphor identified by Lakoff and Johnson. The use of this metaphor means that a statement such as "He ran and ran and ran and ran" indicates more running than just "he ran" (1980:127). This type of iteration occurs in tales from each of the three groups. In the Burmese tales the drunkard becomes "more and more intoxicated" (D,13-14), the six mendicants "searched and searched" (SM,78) for the missing youngest mendicant, and the vulture becomes "more and more proud" (W,16). In the Euro-Canadian tales a young prince seeks Briar-rose after "long, long years" (L,70) and the peasant's wise daughter wraps a fishing net "round and round her" (P,41). In the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* Oni discharges "another and another" arrow in quick succession (O,134).

It is obvious, then, that the language of these tales is metaphoric. What is less obvious is whether the identification of the same metaphorical concepts in all three groups of tales is evidence that the source cultures have developed similar conceptual systems. The presence of similar metaphors in these stories might be attributed to the fact that all of the tales have been translated into English. It is therefore very difficult to assess the impact these metaphors have on readability. For instance, the "time is money" metaphor might adversely affect tale readability if the tale audience is unfamiliar with this conception of time. On the other hand, if the tale audience conceives of time in this manner, tale readability should not be affected by the presence of this metaphor.

Personification

Although Lüthi calls attention to the sparing use of metaphor in the European folktale, he does remark that "comparison . . . is relatively frequent" (1984:110). When Lüthi speaks of comparison, he emphasizes the use of simile: most of his examples illustrate that particular trope (1984:110-111). However, although numerous examples of simile have been identified in these folktales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland, the use of personification is even more widespread.

"**Personification** [is] a figure . . . in which abstractions, animals, ideas, and inanimate objects are endowed with human form, character, traits, or sensibilities. In personification, an entirely imaginary creature or person also may be conceived of as representing an idea or object."[1] Personification occurs in every tale selected for this study. It is most obvious in those tales where the main characters are animals endowed with human traits, abilities, and motivations. The animals in Burma's *The crow and the wren, The rabbit has a cold, Why the vulture is bald,* Canada's *Little Briar-rose, The louse and the flea, The sole, The wolf and the fox,* and all four of the Yoruba tales possess language, have the same emotional capacities as humans, and respond intelligently, rather than instinctively, to the situations in which they find themselves.

---

[1] Harry Shaw, *Dictionary of literary terms,* 283.

These animals are capable of articulating their private thoughts and desires. Upon his discovery that the captive wren has a daughter, the crow in Burma's *The crow and the wren* publicizes his desire for the daughter by striking a bargain with the wren: "The Crow thought to himself, 'This Wren is old and tough, but her daughter will be young and soft,' and so he suggested to the Wren, 'I will let you go if you will promise to give me your daughter to eat on the seventh day from now.' The Wren promised and the Crow let her go" (CW,4-9). Similarly, in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* the wolf repeatedly expresses his greedy desires by threatening the fox: "'Red-fox, get me something to eat, or else I will eat you yourself" (WF,5-6,19-20,36-37). In the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* Anodo deliberately stalks Oni: when Oni challenges him, Anodo counters with a threat of his own:

> 'Ah fortune, I have found a victim tonight,
> I have lived many months without a kill,
> Will the singer come out and feel the sharpness
> Of my talons and of my beak? It will take me
> A moment to tear him to pieces. Come out' (O,111-115).

The talking frog in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* does not announce his private wishes, but rather prophesies the birth of Briar-rose.

These articulate animals not only bargain, threaten, and predict, they also lie. In Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* King Lion's stated reasons for testing his ministers are lies, as is Ijapa's protestation of innocence ("'It is not I who has taken your yams'" (O,43)) in Yorubaland's *Ijapa and the hot water test.* The mendacious fox in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* tells a falsehood when, in response to the wolf's query, he replies: "'I must see that no one is coming'" (WF,49). Lying is, of course, a unique human ability since it presupposes that the speaker possess language. Hence these animals are personified.

Aside from their obvious ability to speak a human language, animals in these tales often make inarticulate noises that are more typical of humans than of animals. For instance, the little flea "screams" when she falls into the brew (LF,3). In *The sole*, the sole screams the words "Who is first" (S,17) and cries "the naked herring" (S,19). Such verbs as "scream" and "cry" contribute to personification because it is humans who scream and cry; animals more usually howl or whine.

In addition to their precocious abilities with language, the animals in these tales often demonstrate human sensibilities. The crow in the Burmese tale initially feels great joy at the fire's unconditional co-operation and then, after he realizes that he cannot carry fire in his beak, he flies home in disgust (CW,111-112). In *The rabbit has a cold* King Lion is perfidious, the bear is honest, and the rabbit is diplomatic. On different occasions the vulture in *Why the vulture is bald* is humble, pessimistic, worried, conceited, proud, insolent, and sour. In response to these moods, his community is patient, compassionate, and finally, angry. The tree stump and the cotton tree in the Yoruba *1400 cowries* also experience annoyance (C,76,95). The sole in the Euro-Canadian tale hopes to win the race (S,14-15) and is envious of the winner--the herring. In Canada's *The wolf and the fox* the wolf is avaricious and the birds in Yorubaland's *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* are selfish and vain. The ega, for instance, thinks his beauty surpasses that of all others (T,16-17). Moreover, all of the birds feel superior to the vulture: "Everybody regarded him as a vulgar ne'er-do-well, who was very ugly and spent all his time searching around the village rubbish dumps, or following bush fires" (T,29-32).

Personification is also obvious in such tales as *The rabbit has a cold* (Burma), *The sole* (Canada), *Ijapa and the hot water test* (Yorubaland), and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* (Yorubaland) because the animals in these tales live in structured societies, follow human occupations, and observe human conventions. In *The rabbit has a cold* King Lion administers a kingdom, assisted by his three ministers (the bear, the monkey, and the rabbit). The fish in *The sole* envision such a kingdom (S,7-10) and the animals in *Ijapa and the hot water test* owe allegiance to their chief, whose fields they harvest. The animals in this tale possess private property, as do the birds in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven.* Both Ijapa (I,28) and the olokoshe in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* (T,24-25) are married, a state to which the cricket in *1400 cowries* also aspires. Moreover, the animals in *1400 cowries* and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* observe religious rites. The louse and the flea in the Euro-Canadian tale and the cricket in the Yoruba *1400 cowries* voluntarily imbibe alcoholic beverages. The louse and the flea brew their own beer (LF,1-2) and the cricket purchases his palm wine: "Instead of taking the money to his father-in-law, he spent it on palm wine, with the result that he soon became very drunk" (C,5-7).

Aside from animals, inanimate concrete entities and abstract concepts are also personified in these tales. For example, in the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* Oni's boots are animate. They grow as Oni does (O,2) and they respond to human commands:

> When they had all tried without success, the boot was placed before the king and Oni stepped forward and said:
>
> 'Boot from Heaven--boot from Heaven,
> Go on to your master's foot.'

> Immediately, the boot started to move from before the king and fitted itself on to Oni's foot of its own accord (O,187-192).

Another example occurs in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* when Briar-rose, who has never before seen a spindle, asks the old woman: "'What sort of thing is that, that rattles round so merrily?'" (L,44). The inanimate spindle is personified when a human mood is attached to it.

Human attributes and abilities are even applied to places. Earth and heaven are personified in the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* when the vulture sings of the quarrel between them:

> 'Oh what a war now exists,
> A serious war it is indeed,
> When the Earth and Heavens quarrel.
> The rain would not come down to Earth,
> And all the crops would not grow green.
> Heaven claims seniority
> Over Earth--Earth over Heaven' (T,36-42).

In this song the vulture claims that earth and heaven are at war with one another--a state only humans are generally thought capable of achieving. As well, the places possess language: they quarrel and claim seniority over each other. In addition, rain and crops are also personified in the song because they are credited with volition. The rain would not (rather than could not) come; the crops would not (rather than could not) grow. The words "would not" imply volition. It is as if the rain and crops have consciously decided not to appear. Plants are also personified in Canada's *Little Briar-rose:* "the thorns held fast together, as if they had hands" (L,67-68). Moreover, the flowers have a will of their own: "When the King's son came near to the thorn-hedge, it was nothing but large and beautiful flowers, which parted from each other of their own accord, and let him pass unhurt, then they closed again behind him like a hedge" (L,82-86). Such conscious decision-making by entities lacking consciousness is evidence of personification.

Finally, such abstract concepts as time are frequently personified in these tales. Whenever time is credited with movement, it is personified. Other personified abstractions include quarrels, plans, darkness, and sleep. In Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* the quarrel comes before the king (LP,61); in *Ijapa and the hot water test* a plan comes to Ijapa (I,7); and in *Oni and the great bird* darkness becomes animate in such phrases as "it was growing dark" (O,23). Finally, in *Little Briar-rose* "sleep extend[s] over the whole palace" (L,50) and in *Oni and the great bird* it has a will of its own: "Sleep would not come to Oni" (O,63-64). The prevalence of personification thus supports Lüthi's claim that comparison is quite a common feature in the folktale. This particular type of comparison, in which various animals and abstractions hold universal human attributes, would appear to enhance readability because the audience need not possess particularistic knowledge of the individualizing characteristics of animals. Moreover, when abstractions become concrete entities, they are easier to visualize, and hence readability improves.

Simile

A third figure of thought occurring less frequently in these tales than metaphor and personification is simile. "In a **simile** a comparison between two distinctly different things is indicated by the word 'like' or 'as'."[1] Because of these signal words, examples of simile are often easier to identify than are many examples of metaphor and personification. Most of the similes in these tales use concrete vehicles to describe abstract tenors. For example, in Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* the monkey tells King Lion that the smell issuing from King Lion's mouth is "as sweet as the choicest perfume" (R,25-26). An abstract tenor--the smell of King Lion's breath--is compared to a universal and concrete entity--perfume.

---

[1] Abrams, 61.

The Euro-Canadian and the Yoruba tales show a greater tendency to use simile than do the Burmese tales (in which only one example was found). As in the Burmese example, most of these similes are concrete and universal. In Canada's *Little Briar-rose* the men seeking Briar-rose fail to penetrate the hedge because "the thorns [hold] fast together, as if they [have] hands" (L,67-68). In this example, two universal and concrete entities are compared--thorns and hands. In a second example from the same tale the "large and beautiful flowers . . . closed again behind him like a hedge" (L,83-86). In this instance as well, two concrete, universal, and natural elements--flowers and hedges--are compared.

Several similes appear in *The peasant's wise daughter*. When the peasant protests that he cannot produce a non-existent pestle, the narrator compares the king's attentiveness to a universal, concrete, and natural phenomenon--the wind: "he might just as well have spoken to the wind" (P,19-20). Finally, the peasant tells the king: "'It is as easy for me to fish on dry land as it is for an ox to have a foal'" (P,78-79). Two unrelated (and impossible) activities are related through the word "as". In *The sole* the pike's movement is compared to that of a concrete and universal weapon: "Like an arrow, the pike darted away" (S,12-13).

Numerous similes also occur in the Yoruba tales and, like the Burmese and Euro-Canadian similes, they are universal and concrete. In *Oni and the great bird* the sound of Anodo's wings is compared to the sound of a great wind: "The old man had hardly finished speaking before Oni heard the sound of great wings flapping over the house. It sounded like a great wind" (O,57-59). In a second example from this tale, Anodo crashes into a cotton tree, "which snapped like a twig" (O,142).

Three rather amusing examples of simile also come from *Ijapa and the hot water test.* The narrator states that "Ijapa now became very helpful, as though he were the chief's assistant" (I,71-72). The words "as though" introduce a comparison between two unlike and concrete beings--Ijapa and the chief's assistant. The simile underlines the fact that although Ijapa's actions resemble those of a loyal assistant, he is not that assistant. On another occasion, the narrator remarks that "Ijapa showed his calabash of water to this one and that one, each in turn, as evidence of the large amount of hot water he would drink" (I,119-121). Again, Ijapa's calabash of cooled water is *not* evidence of the large amount of hot water he will drink. Finally, the narrator compares Ijapa's action of jumping into the pot of water with admissable evidence in a real trial: "And as an additional proof of his innocence, Ijapa jumped into the pot from which the water had come" (I,132-134). Here too, Ijapa's action, which purports to be evidence, is not. These similes thus reinforce that Ijapa is not innocent and that his appearance is deceiving. Finally, in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the narrator compares the birds to the humans: "The people also, like the birds, had forgotten his service and drove him away" (T,61-63). Two unlike, but concrete and universal entities, humans and birds, are thought to exhibit a similarity in behaviour: forgetfulness and lack of generosity.

Simile, metaphor, and personification are thus the three main figures of thought occurring in these tales. All three groups of tales use these tropes to conceptualize abstractions in universal and concrete terms (moods become containers, time becomes money, time exhibits human behaviour, hedges are like hands). Although the figures of thought occurring in these tales may simply be the result of the English translations, they nevertheless exemplify the preoccupation these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales have with visual images. Because the vehicles of metaphor and simile are not only concrete, but also universal, they may contribute to readability.

In addition to the tropes, such figures of speech as rhetorical question, apostrophe, chiasmus, hyperbole, and irony also exist in these tales. The first four of these rhetorical figures occur only rarely in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. For instance, the fox in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* asks a rhetorical question when he asks the wolf why he is such a glutton (WF,17,34). An apostrophe (a direct address either to an absent person or to an abstract or inanimate entity[1]) occurs in the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird* when Anodo sings these words: "'Ah fortune, I have found a victim tonight'" (O,111). Hyperbole is also evident in this tale: Anodo is much larger than life-size and preys on humans; Oni is superhuman because he is immortal. Chiasmus, a sequence of two phrases or clauses which are parallel in syntax, but with a reversal in the order of the words,[2] occurs in the vulture's song in the Yoruba

---

[1] Abrams, 149.
[2] Abrams, 150.

Taking a sacrifice to heaven: "'Heaven claims seniority / Over Earth--Earth over Heaven'" (T,41-42). The most prevalent figure of speech in these tales, however, is irony, and it occurs throughout the tales from all three cultures.

Irony

> In Greek comedy the character called the *eiron* was a 'dissembler,' who characteristically spoke in understatement and deliberately pretended to be less intelligent than he was, yet triumphed over the *alazon*--the self-deceiving and stupid braggart. In most of the diverse critical uses of the term 'irony' there remains the root sense of dissimulation, or of a difference between what is asserted and what is actually the case.
>
> **Verbal irony** is a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from that which he ostensibly asserts. Such an ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with the implication of a very different attitude or evaluation. . . . Sometimes the use of irony . . . is very complex; the meaning and evaluations may be subtly qualified rather than simply reversed, and the clues to the ironic countermeaning under the surface statement may be indirect and unobtrusive. That is why recourse to irony by an author carries an implicit compliment to the intelligence of the reader, who is associated with the author and the knowing minority who are not taken in by the ostensible meaning. . . .
>
> Some literary works exhibit **structural irony**, in that they are persistently, or even totally, ironic. In such works the author, instead of using an occasional verbal irony, introduces a structural feature which serves to sustain the duplicity of meaning. One common device of this sort is the invention of a **naive hero**, or else a naive narrator or spokesman, whose invincible simplicity leads him to persist in putting an interpretation on affairs which the knowing reader--who penetrates to, and shares, the implicit point of view of the authorial presence behind the naive *persona*--just as persistently is able to alter and correct. . . . A related device for sustaining ironic qualification is the use of the *fallible narrator*, in which the teller of the story is himself a participant in it but, although he may be neither foolish nor demented, nevertheless manifests a failure of insight, viewing and appraising his own motives, and the motives and actions of other characters, through the distorting perspective of his prejudices and private interests. . . .
>
> **Dramatic irony** involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience shares with the author knowledge of which a character is ignorant: the character acts in a way grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of

what fate holds in store, or says something that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way that he means it.[1]

In *The fairytale as art form and portrait of man* Max Lüthi argues that irony pervades the folktale. He writes:

> *Irony* flashes in the opening and closing formulas of the fairytale and in several--partially traditional, partially improvised--incidental remarks of the narrator or individual fairytale figures. But far more important is the irony at work in *what happens* in the fairytale. One can speak of irony anyplace where what happens is the opposite of what those affected have strived for or expected. . . . Word irony, *rhetorical irony*, is mostly mocking, disillusioning, and negative; and sequential irony, *the irony of event*, is known to us mainly in the form of tragic irony, something thus also negative. Therefore, I prefer to call the rarer positive variety of irony *contrary irony (Konträrironie)*. It occurs infrequently in literature, just as it does in life--but it is the predominant variety in the fairytale. . . Even in the fairytale, of course, it is clear that good, or what is intended to be good, can ironically lead to evil: The celebration after the birth of Sleeping Beauty, which is intended to bestow blessings on the child, leads to her enchantment; a father's intention of fulfilling the strange wish of his youngest daughter causes harm. But the fairytale often brings forth the opposite configuration: Evil leads to good (just as in both of the examples just mentioned everything turns out well after all). . . . Above all, ... one finds irony interwoven with the problem of appearance vs. reality: It is irony, even positive irony, that, contrary to all expectations and arrangements, the despised and the maltreated time and again end up emerging as winners, and that they finally outshine those in whose shadows they have stood. . . .
>
> Just as the phenomenon of *self-injury* and *self-destruction* belongs to the area of irony, so also does the phenomenon of *manipulation*. . . . Manipulation is not the same as ordering something done; as with irony, it is a matter of indirectness. The behind-the-scenes manipulation turns others into puppets, but in such a way that--and again it is precisely herein that the irony lies--they think they are acting independently and of their own free will (1984:129-131).

Of the three types of irony--verbal, structural, dramatic--mentioned by Abrams, it is, as Lüthi asserts, dramatic irony which predominates in these folktales. The absence of structural and verbal irony is largely the result of the presence in these tales of reliable narrators whose intrusions obliterate the opportunities for verbal irony. The assertions of the characters of these tales not infrequently conflict with what is actually the case. However, in these tales this results not in subtle verbal irony, but in blatant mendacity. For example, the narrator of Burma's *The rabbit has a cold* makes it clear that King Lion lies to his ministers:

---

[1] Abrams, 80-82.

> one day the Lion became tired of their company, and wanted to kill and eat them. However, as he himself had chosen them to be his ministers, he had to think of an excuse which would give a semblance of legality to his unjust act.
>
> So King Lion called his three ministers of state, and said to them, 'My lords, you have been my ministers for some time, and I must now find out whether high office has spoilt you' (R,3-11).

In the same tale the narrator removes all doubt that the monkey's comparison of the king's breath to perfume is ironic: "The Monkey, after witnessing the fate of the Bear, thought that the only way to escape with his life was to resort to flattery" (R,22-25).

Similarly, in Canada's *The wolf and the fox* the narrator's explanation of the fox's actions, plus his description of the fox as a crafty fellow, underline the fact that the fox lies to the wolf:

> The fox liked [the meat] also, but looked about everywhere, and often ran to the hole by which they had come in, to find out if his body was still thin enough to slip through it. The wolf said: 'Dear fox, tell me why you are running here and there so much, and jumping in and out?'
>
> 'I must see that no one is coming,' replied the crafty fellow (WF,44-49).

Again, in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* the narrator makes it abundantly clear that Ijapa's claim of loyalty to the chief is a falsehood: "For each one he put in the basket he put another in the hole. Some of the workers scolded him for being slow, but Ijapa said: 'I have great respect for the chief's yams. I handle them gently so as not to bruise them' (I,21-25).

There are, however, some instances in *Ijapa and the hot water test* where the narrator's incidental remarks might be construed as ironic. From the outset of the tale it is clear that Ijapa is not a helpful subject. His sole aim in participating in the chief's harvest is to remove part of that harvest to his own storehouse; his only goal during the trial is to deflect the blame for that theft away from himself. Yet the narrator states: "Ijapa now became very helpful, as though he were the chief's assistant" (I,71-72). Because the narrator makes this statement in the face of Ijapa's obvious attempts to subvert the trial proceedings, his assertion might be considered ironic. Later in the story, the narrator relates how Ijapa proves his innocence:

> So Ijapa drank. Because the water had become cool, it did not pain him. He emptied the calabash. The chief nodded his approval. Ijapa said: 'You have seen it. I did not cry out. Tears did not come from my eyes. How then can I be guilty?' And as an additional proof of his innocence, Ijapa jumped into the pot from which the water had come. The water in the pot also was cool (I,128-134).

The words "as an additional proof of his innocence" are ironic because Ijapa's action, as the narrator is aware, does not establish his innocence because the water is no longer hot. Thus, two very rare examples of verbal irony exist in *Ijapa and the hot water test*.

Far more common in these folktales than verbal irony is dramatic irony. All of the examples of dramatic irony mentioned by Lüthi--reversals of situation, appearance versus reality (for example, unpromising heroes), self-injury, manipulation (1984:129-131)--are manifest in these tales.

The conflict between appearance and reality occurs in all of the tales. As mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation, unpromising heroes dominate these folktales. In addition, reversals of situation occur in almost every tale, the only exception being the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. In Canada's *Little Briar-rose* the feast intended to secure a rosy future for the princess leads to disaster. Because Ijapa manipulates his judges, the trial in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* produces, not justice, but injustice. The wolf in the Euro-Canadian tale views the fox's presence in the cellar as a safeguard, and yet the fox actually endangers the wolf by attracting the attention of the farmer:

> Said the wolf: 'I will go when you do, that you may help me if I am not able to get away' . . . . The fox liked [the meat] also, but looked about everywhere, and often ran to the hole by which they had come in, to find out if his body was still thin enough to slip through it. The wolf said: 'Dear fox, tell me why you are running here and there so much, and jumping in and out?'
>
> 'I must see that no one is coming,' replied the crafty fellow. 'Don't eat too much!' Then said the wolf: 'I shall not leave until the barrel is empty.' In the meantime the farmer, who had heard the noise of the fox's jumping, came into the cellar. When the fox saw him he was out of the hole at one bound. The wolf wanted to follow him, but he had made himself so fat with eating that he could no longer get through, but stuck fast. Then came the farmer with a cudgel and struck him dead, but the fox bounded into the forest, glad to be rid of the old glutton (WF,39-57).

In view of the fox's actions when the farmer appears, and, as well, in view of the wolf's repeated threats to eat the fox, the wolf's endearment ("Dear fox") and trust in the fox's willingness to assist him are quite misplaced and thus ironic. Nevertheless, the wolf is served his just desserts when his fatal flaw--greediness--finally kills him.

This type of positive irony is also evident in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* and *The sole*, and in Burma's *Why the vulture is bald*. In *The peasant's wise daughter* the king seals his own fate when he grants that the queen might take with her into exile her "dearest and best" possession (P,92). With this boon he authorizes her subsequent actions:

> At length his wife came to his bedside and said: 'My dear lord and King, you told me I might bring away with me from the palace that which was dearest and most precious in my eyes--I have nothing more precious and dear than yourself, so I have brought you with me' (P,105-109).

Poetic justice also prevails in *The sole* and *Why the vulture is bald.* In the former, the sole's mouth is repositioned to one side as punishment for the twisted words which have come out of it. In the latter, the source of the vulture's pride--his feathers--are removed as chastisement for that pride. These stories in which characters inadvertently pronounce their own sentences or receive fitting punishments convey the ironic theme of self-injury.

All of the tales mentioned thus far support Lüthi's claim that contrary irony prevails in the folktale. That this is so renders the lack of reversal in the Yoruba *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* doubly ironic. In this tale the only beneficent character--the vulture--not only goes unrewarded for his good deeds, but is actually punished for the misdeeds of his selfish community:

> The vulture has remained an outcast amongst the birds from that day to this. He still loiters around the village markets and rubbish dumps, or turns up at the bush fires where he is not welcomed by the others. His burnt feathers never grew again, a reminder to the selfish people who refused to help him (T,67-72).

This ending is unexpected and thus ironic because, contrary to the usual folktale pattern, the good character does not triumph in the end.

This section of chapter six thus reveals that dramatic irony pervades these folktales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland. This type of irony is less complex than either structural or verbal irony and does not demand excessive sophistication from the audience. Therefore, because it is dramatic irony that predominates, the readability level of the tales is likely not compromised by its presence.

Figures of Sound

In addition to figures of thought and speech, there are also recurring figures of sound in these tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland. Alliteration and assonance occur in the tales from all three groups, and examples of rhyme and onomatopoeia are present in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales. A single example of consonance comes from the Euro-Canadian tale, *The peasant's wise daughter*.

"**Alliteration** is the repetition of speech sounds in a sequence of nearby words; the term is usually applied only to consonants, and only when the recurrent sound occurs in a conspicuous position at the beginning of a word or of a stressed syllable within a word."[1] Examples of alliteration abound in these tales. In Burma's *The seven mendicants* and Canada's *Little Briar-rose* and *The louse and the flea* the Princess Learned-in-the-Law, the thirteenth wise woman, and the little louse all have alliterative names. The *b* sounds are repeated in *The seven mendicants* when the Princess Learned-in-the-Law states that "in a bailment, both the bailee and the bailor must conform to all the stipulations made at the time of the bailment" (SM,67-68). *C* sounds recur in *The drunkard and the opium-eater*: "one ghost suggested that the company be carefully counted" (D,78-79) and in *The rabbit has a cold*: "'May I go home and rest until my cold is cured'" (R,36-37). The water in *The crow and the wren* repeats *g* sounds when he asks the crow to "go and get" a pot (CW,23), and *m* sounds are duplicated when the birds in *Why the vulture is bald* inform the vulture that he is "merely moulting" (W,5-6). Successive *p* sounds occur in the following phrase from *The peasant's wise daughter:* "he was put in prison, and was to stay there until he produced the pestle" (P,20-21). The fish in *The sole* meet "together to choose for their ruler the one who could cleave through the water most quickly" (P,8-10) and, following his beating, the wolf in *The wolf and the fox* has "lame legs" (WF,31). In *Ijapa and the hot water test* Ijapa "dug a deep hole" (I,8), the King of Ajo complains in *Oni and the great bird* that all of his hunters "have been killed or carried off by Anodo" (O,77), and the crops in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* will not "grow green" (T,40).

---

[1] Abrams, 7.

P, c, and *t* sounds are repeated in the following phrase from *1400 cowries:* "The poor cricket was pricked by the cotton tree's thorns" (C,113). This phrase also serves as an example of assonance (the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds--especially in stressed syllables--in a sequence of nearby words[1]) because the high front lax vowel sound recurs in the words "cricket" and "pricked". Assonance also occurs in the Burmese *The crow and the wren* when the wren claims that her daughter is "clean and sweet" (CW,13) and in Canada's *The louse and the flea* where the high front tense vowel sound is repeated in several successive lines:

> The little louse has burnt herself,
> The little flea is weeping,
> The little door is creaking,
> The little broom is sweeping (LF,20-23).

---

[1] Abrams, 7.

This quotation also contains end rhyme: the words "weeping" and "sweeping" rhyme with one another.

Two other phrases which serve concurrently as examples of assonance and internal rhyme occur in Canada's *Little Briar-rose* and Yorubaland's *1400 cowries*. In the Euro-Canadian tale Briar-rose pricks her finger and falls into "a deep sleep" (L,49). In the Yoruba tale the cotton tree explains to the roan why he is in trouble: "'You have eaten my leaves as they bent in the breeze'" (C,19). The words "eaten", "leaves", and "breeze" all contain the high front tense vowel sound, and, in addition, "leaves" rhymes with "breeze".

Two examples of onomatopoeia (a term applied to a word, or a combination of words, whose sound seems to resemble the sound it denotes[1]) have also been identified in one Euro-Canadian and one Yoruba tale. In Canada's *Little Briar-rose*, Briar-rose asks: "'What sort of thing is that, that rattles round so merrily?'" (L,44). The word "rattles" is an example of onomatopoeia, as is the word "snapped" in the following phrase from the Yoruba *Oni and the great bird:* "it plunged on into a cotton tree, which snapped like a twig" (O,141-142). Finally, the only example of consonance (the repetition of a sequence of consonants, but with a change in the intervening stressed vowel[2]) occurs in Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* when the king awakens in strange surroundings and exclaims "good God!" (P,104).

Thus, the presence of these various figures of sound would seem to enhance the auditory quality of these tales without sacrificing readability.

---

[1] Abrams, 118.
[2] Abrams, 7.

Once again, however, it must be stressed that the presence of these elements depends on the actual version of the text. Different versions may contain different figures of sound.

OTHER STYLISTIC FEATURES

These tales exhibit similarity with respect to readability level, imagery, and figurative language. Other stylistic similarities between the three groups of tales include such features as verse, proverbs, and opening and closing formulas. As mentioned in chapter five of this dissertation, all three groups of tales employ verse[1] to express the problems confronting the reciters. In the Yoruba tales, however, the verses become songs which express and redress conflict. In *1400 cowries* the cricket, the roan, the hunter, the wood, the hawk, the prince, and the king all sing the problem to a subsequent character:

> The cotton tree started to sing:
>
> 'Beautiful roan, beautiful roan, you are in trouble,
> You have eaten my leaves as they bent in the breeze.
> Cricket's body was wounded by cotton tree's thorns,
> The cricket who owes the palm wine seller the cowries.
> Fourteen hundred of these you must pay unto me,
> The gods will be angry if you do not pay up' (C,16-23).

Similarly, in *Oni and the great bird* Oni and Anodo use song to publicize their conflict:

> Oni waited till the great bird was overhead and then he commenced to sing:
>
> 'Tonight Oni will be at war with Anodo,
> The eagle, whose talons are sharper than knives,
> For now the knives of nature and man will meet.
> Oni is invincible, his knife is sharp.'

---

[1] Cf. pages 162-165.

> Anodo heard the challenge as he hovered over the house, and circling slowly round he came back and sang:-
>
> 'Ah fortune, I have found a victim tonight,
> I have lived many months without a kill,
> Will the singer come out and feel the sharpness
> Of my talons and of my beak? It will take me
> A moment to tear him to pieces. Come out' (O,103-115).

In *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the vulture's song provides background to the situation and also announces the vulture's intention to take up the challenge:

> The vulture having agreed to carry the sacrifice, the people prepared a fire and, when this was ready, they heard him sing in his great voice:
>
> 'Oh what a war now exists,
> A serious war it is indeed,
> When the Earth and Heavens quarrel.
> The rain would not come down to Earth,
> And all the crops would not grow green.
> Heaven claims seniority
> Over Earth--Earth over Heaven.
> But no volunteers were found to take
> The sacrifice when it was ready.
> At last poor vulture came and did
> The arduous task all others refused' (T,33-46).

Songs and chants are also used in *Ijapa and the hot water test* to affirm the characters' support for Ijapa: "'Boys of the village,' Ijapa chanted, 'see how full the calabash is!' The boys chanted back: 'We see it. You do well, Ijapa!'" (I,112-115).

The only tale from Burma or Canada that contains lines resembling a song or a chant is the Burmese tale *The drunkard and the opium-eater*. The drunkard's words--"'One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. All correct. All correct'" (D,24-26)--work like a charm in dispelling the suspicions the ghosts have about his true identity. Thus, in the Yoruba tales song is much more commonly used in public declarations than is the case in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales. However, in all cases the use of verse (and proverbs) enhances tale readability because these features provide necessary redundancy, supply missing information, and clarify tale meaning.

OPENING AND CLOSING FORMULAS

A final aspect of the language characterizing these tales is the inclusion, in all three groups of tales, of opening and closing formulas. Most of these formulas contain expressions of time which serve either to break down or to reconstruct barriers with the real world of the audience.

Many of the tales open with some general expression of time that locates the story in some unspecified period in the past. For instance, the narrator of Burma's *The drunkard and the opium-eater* opens his story with the words "once in a village" (D,1). The word "once" also occurs in the opening lines of the following tales: Burma's *The crow and the wren*, Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter*, and three Yoruba tales--*1400 cowries*, *Oni and the great bird*, and *Taking a sacrifice to heaven*. In addition, Canada's *Little Briar-rose* begins with the words "a long time ago" (L,1). These words are echoed at the beginning of *The sole:* "The fishes had for a long time been discontented" (S,1). One final variation occurs in the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test:* "It is said that one time" (I,1).

Time phrases also occur in closing formulas and they take the audience from story time (the past) to real time (the present). This is particularly the case with the etiological tales. In Burma's *Why the vulture is bald* the narrator states: "That is why even at the present day the Vulture is a sour and ugly old bird" (W,21-23). In Canada's *The sole* the narrator says: "Since that time the sole has been punished by having been given a mouth on one side" (S,20-21). In Yorubaland's *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* the narrator says that "the vulture has remained an outcast amongst the birds from that day to this" (T,67-68). Other Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales also end with this device. Canada's *The peasant's wise daughter* concludes with "and at the present time they are very likely still living" (P,112), and the Yoruba *Ijapa and the hot water test* ends with a contemporary proverb introduced with the time phrase "since then" (I,143).

These formulas, which enhance readability by providing clear story boundaries, also underline cultural differences in the tales because they reveal that the stories are preoccupied with different aspects of the human condition. For instance, the Euro-Canadian tales are predominantly concerned with deprivation. At the beginning of *Little Briar-rose* the king and queen are childless: "A long time ago there were a King and Queen who said every day: 'Ah, if only we had a child!' but they never had one" (L,1-2). The peasant in *The peasant's wise daughter* is fortunate enough to have a child, but suffers from a lack of material possessions: "There was once a poor peasant who had no land, but only a small house, and one daughter" (P,1-2). In *The sole* "no order prevail[s] in their kingdom" (S,1-2) and the fox in *The wolf and the fox* has been deprived of equality and freedom: "The wolf had the fox with him, and whatsoever the wolf wished, that the fox was compelled to do, for he was the weaker, and he would gladly have been rid of his master" (WF,1-3).

One half of the Yoruba tales are preoccupied with farming. *Ijapa and the hot water test* opens with the words "It is said that one time Ijapa was called upon to come and help harvest the chief's fields" (I,1-2), and the opening problem in *Taking a sacrifice to heaven* is that farming conditions are impossible: "There was once a time when no rain fell upon the earth and the crops did not grow" (T,1-2). The openings of the other two tales, *1400 cowries* and *Oni and the great bird,* discuss such human rites as marriage and birth: the cricket wishes to marry (C,1) and Oni is born with an unusual congenital feature--a pair of boots (O,1-2).

The opening lines of the Burmese tales are concerned mainly with interpersonal relations. *The crow and the wren* opens with predation: "The Crow once caught the Wren, and said to her, 'I will eat you now'" (CW,1-2). The drunkard and the opium-eater live as outcasts in a village (D,1-3); the king and his appointed ministers roam the forest together in *The rabbit has a cold;* a business deal is struck in *The seven mendicants;* and *Why the vulture is bald* opens with the narrator's rather unflattering opinion of the vulture: "The Vulture was originally a humble old bird, and rather stupid" (W,1-2). Thus, the opening formulas of the three groups of tales reveal that the tales are preoccupied with different aspects of existence.

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

At this point it is worthwhile to mention that chapter six has stressed the readability level of the tales. This is justifiable because the folktales under scrutiny have been written down and hence are part of the literary tradition. It is also reasonable to assume that the use of folktales in ESL classes will involve reading activities, and thus the determination of readability levels is useful to the ESL teacher. Nevertheless, the mastery of a second language also involves the acquisition of oral and listening skills. These folktales were, and in some cases still are, a part of the oral tradition. Oral tales are meant to be speech acts and therefore it is also important to briefly consider the aspect of listening comprehension.

To date, little direct research on second-language listening comprehension has been done, and no one has yet devised a listening comprehension scale comparable to those developed for measuring readability levels. Nevertheless, scholars agree that materials are suitable for developing listening comprehension if they display the following characteristics: content validity (that is, materials must practise listening comprehension and not something else, such as long-term memory); purposefulness and transferability (the material should reflect a purpose for listening that approximates real-life listening); authenticity (the material should resemble natural discourse).[1] These qualities would seem to characterize these folktales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland. These stories combine utility of structure with redundancy and hence display content validity; the stories are part of real-life listening; and authenticity is evident in the figures of sound and in the dialogues of the characters. Thus, in addition to their high readability levels, these tales appear to achieve high levels of listening comprehension as well.

---

[1] These characteristics were compiled after examining the works of the following scholars: Henri Basse, Gillian Brown, R. Dirven, Harold Fish, Suzanne Herschenhorn, Alice C. Omaggio, Don Porter and John Roberts, Jack C. Richards, John A. Stanley, Howard Thomas, Penny Ur. Complete references are found in the bibliography of secondary sources.

In conclusion, this chapter establishes through the Fry readability test that the high level of readability exhibited by these tales is partially due to the absence of difficult vocabulary. Although the language of the Yoruba tales appears to be simpler than that of the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales, the Yoruba tales make extensive use of the same figures of thought, speech, and sound which prevail in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales, and all three groups of tales exhibit such structural features as verse and opening and closing formulas. However, unlike the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales, the Yoruba tales include songs and proverbs. A final important structural similarity is the extensive reliance of all three groups of tales on visual images which stress beauty, size, and age.

Many of these language structures enhance tale readability. Verse, song, and proverb usually clarify tale happenings and hence they improve readability. Because tale imagery emphasizes such universal and abstract concepts as beauty, age, and size, the tale audience need not possess specific cultural knowledge in order to understand the imagery. Formulas likely enhance readability by signalling to the audience that a story is in progress. At times, however, it is difficult to assess the effect language structures have on readability. Although tale metaphors render abstractions in universal and concrete terms, and reveal similar conceptual systems (such as time is a moving object), it may be that the underlying conceptual systems are not inherent in the tales, but are the product of the English translation. Readability might be compromised if the audience is unfamiliar with those particular conceptual systems. Finally, the figures of sound enhance the auditory appeal of these tales without in any way impeding readability.

In closing, the fact that these tales achieve high levels of readability (and listening comprehension) through the presence of similar language structures has the following ramifications. Firstly, the very existence in these tales of the same tropes, figures of speech, and figures of sound means that these folktales can be used to teach these structures. Furthermore, when tales contain the same structures and display similar vocabulary levels, they also exact similar decoding practices. In other words, such tales require similar reading or listening strategies and thus they demand comparable degrees of sophistication from the audience. This suggests that the tales from Burma and Canada can be used interchangeably with the same audience; the slightly lower vocabulary level of the Yoruba tales indicates that perhaps the Yoruba tales are best suited for a slightly less advanced group.

At this point it is important to note that chapter five and chapter six generate slightly different conclusions regarding suitable audiences for these folktales. Chapter five concludes with the observation that these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales appear to make similar communicative demands on their audiences because coherence is achieved in the same manner. This suggests that the tales can be used interchangeably with the same audience. Most of the observations of chapter six support this generalization. However, the Fry readability test reveals that the vocabulary of the Yoruba folktales is less sophistocated, than that used in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian stories, suggesting that the Yoruba tales are suitable for less advanced students. This discrepancy is perhaps best treated as a refinement, rather than as a contradiction, of the results of chapter five and most of chapter six. The fact that the vocabulary in the Yoruba tales is easier than that characterizing the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales does not refute the assertion that other similarities exist which seem to indicate that the tales would suit the same audiences. Nevertheless, differences in levels of vocabulary must be taken into account by the ESL teacher. The choice of a particular tale for use with a particular audience might well be governed by the vocabulary levels. Again, however, it should be stressed that other considerations may also be paramount. Such concerns would include cultural content and the particular function the tale is intended to perform in the class. That is, folktales are multi-layered and multi-functional and the absence of sophisticated language does not necessarily decrease their value or their suitability for sophisticated audiences.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The first objective of this study was to develop a method of reading folktales which, by focussing on the manifest cultural, narrative, and language elements, would elicit the messages and the means of their transmission in folktales. Such a method of reading is intended to assist teachers of ESL in assessing the tales' potential contribution with respect to the development of language skills and cross-cultural understanding. Consequently, the second objective of this study was to apply this methodology to a selected group of translated tales from diverse cultures to determine whether those translated tales reflect such a cultural diversity while simultaneously presenting in a simple and direct way universal concepts that transcend the cultural differences.

The method developed and employed in this dissertation addresses the five surface elements in tales: character, plot, setting, narration, and language. The application of this method involves the identification and the cross-cultural comparison of those elements.

In this study, the method was applied to a selected group of translated Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales. The surface elements of each folktale were identified (using definitions from literature, folklore, and anthropology), examined, and then compared intraculturally (with other folktales from the same cultural group) and finally interculturally (with the folktales from the other cultural groups). Firstly, the physical and intellectual attributes, and the rewards and punishments of characters were studied and compared to reveal the values and the views of the individual embedded in the tales. Secondly, the examination of plot focussed on how conflict is portrayed, managed, and resolved in the tales. In studying the third feature, setting, information regarding the fictitious societies, their institutions, and their ecology was gleaned by examining in each tale the physical setting; political, judicial, and economic structures; status and mobility; religion and the supernatural; and portrayals of the family, gender, age, and nature. Fourthly, the narrative techniques (the plot line, the narrator, and textual redundancies) were studied and compared to assess how coherence is achieved in the tales. Finally, the language of the tales (including the vocabulary level, imagery, and such supplementary features as verse, song, proverbs, and formulas) were studied, compared, and assessed for their effects on readability. Using this procedure, the researcher ascertained that the Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales simultaneously reflect cultural diversity while presenting in a simple and direct way universal concepts that transcend their cultural differences.

The detailed study of the cultural, narrative, and language content of these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales uncovers a host of universal concepts relating to both the cultural and the structural aspects of the tales. Not only do many of the same surface features appear in all three groups of tales, but even where surface variation does exist, underlying concepts remain constant between the three groups. For instance, the cultural information gleaned from the study of character, plot, setting, and imagery points to a universal human need to organize--both on an individual level and on a societal level. Although there is some variation in surface features (such as, for example, occupations), many of the same organizational strategies are illustrated in the tales from all three cultural groups. All three groups of tales portray stratified and hierarchical societies in which individuals earn places of importance through determination, self-motivation, and struggle. Monarchies occur in all three groups of tales to assist in the distribution of power, wealth, and justice. Private enterprise and the private ownership of property are recognized institutions in all three groups.

All three groups of tales explore the place of the individual in this organized environment. The nuclear family is portrayed in all three groups of tales as providing for the individual a comforting nest built on affection, open communication, caring, and protection. Contrasting the security and warmth of the home in these fictitious societies are their rather hostile environments in which conflict is all-pervasive. Characters compete for control of territory, resources, positions of power, and disagree about values and norms. Conflict takes similar forms in the tales from diverse cultures, being expressed in litigation, warfare, verbal and physical abuse, magic, theft, competition, fights. Violence is commonplace in all three groups of tales.

The tales from the three cultures also share moral values. Wisdom, temperance, fortitude, justice, and generosity are stressed. In addition, the tales emphasize the need for society to recognize and reward individual contributions to the social order, and, conversely, to detect and punish individual transgressions of that order.

Similar world views are also apparent in the conceptual systems, recurring themes, and analogous tale structures. The translated Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales contain some of the same metaphoric concepts. Examples include: time is a moving object; states of mind are vessels; more of form is more of content.[1] As well, the reversals of situation in which individuals negate inequalities, overcome limitations, and triumph over powerful opponents emphasize in all three groups of tales three optimistic themes: no unpleasant condition is permanent; individuals can transcend their limitations; society is a meritocracy in which individuals are self-determining.

Furthermore, these tales from Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland reveal a similar concept of story and make similar communicative demands on their audiences. All of the tales demonstrate a high degree of coherence and readability. This is in all cases the result of clear, progressive plot lines stripped of extraneous detail; reliable and omniscient narrators whose intrusions provide a high level of redundancy both on the level of character and on the level of plot; and the lack of excessively difficult language. The imagery is also very similar: visual images predominate; tale descriptions rely on such universal and abstract categories as beauty, age, and size; and the same figures of thought, speech, and sound (metaphor, simile, personification, irony, alliteration, and assonance) characterize the language. All three groups of tales make use of verse and opening and closing formulas.

It is thus evident that the translated tales from three diverse cultures present universal concepts in a simple and direct manner. In addition, this study also reveals that tales in translation retain particularities that reflect their cultural differences. The cultural diversity reflected in these tales is of two types: relatively insignificant details that underline slight variations in lifestyle and, on a more serious and insidious level, conflicting outlooks which present potentially controversial messages.

---

[1] The time is money metaphor occurs in the Burmese and Yoruba tales. Its absence in the Euro-Canadian tales is discussed on page 191.

Examples of the first type abound in these tales. Many characters, occupations, and crops are culture-specific. A village headman and seven mendicants surface in one Burmese tale; a palm-wine seller and a village chief appear in two Yoruba tales. One Burmese character has at his disposal quantities of opium; one Yoruba figure becomes intoxicated on palm wine. Other Yoruba characters are required by their chief to harvest yams, and Euro-Canadian protagonists sow their field with corn.

Differences in cultural customs also occur in these tales. A female adjudicates a case in a Burmese tale; a Euro-Canadian woman drinks a farewell toast to her husband; a Yoruba male intending to marry must pay a bride price; a Yoruba woman carries her baby on her back. One Yoruba individual extends hospitality to a complete stranger; and the Yoruba characters, in contrast to the Burmese and Euro-Canadian characters, employ song and proverbs in public declarations. Reference is made to a Yoruba compound and one Euro-Canadian farmhouse has a cellar. More Euro-Canadian tales reach their climaxes indoors than do the Burmese and Yoruba tales.

All of the afore-mentioned examples reflect the tales' source cultures without revealing a great clash in values or perceptions. The following examples, however, expose major and conflicting differences in outlook which may cause offense to audiences holding opposing viewpoints.

Such differences occur in the views of gender, age, and nature dominating the Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales. Females assume important roles in the Burmese and Euro-Canadian tales, whereas all of the Yoruba protagonists and antagonists are male. Moreover, females are much more negatively portrayed in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales than in the Burmese tales. The females in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales often lack intelligence and initiative, cause mayhem, and frequently fail to inspire the respect of other characters. On the other hand, elders receive much better treatment in the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales than in the Burmese tales. In the Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales the aged receive respect, give advice, and are important sources of information. Seniority is not valued in a comparable manner in the Burmese tales.

A third major difference between the groups of tales is apparent in their handling of nature. All three groups of tales acknowledge nature's beauty and utility. However, some Euro-Canadian and Yoruba tales portray man in conflict with nature. In these tales nature ravages the human community and must be destroyed for human society to flourish. None of the Burmese tales depict conflict between man and nature. Other conflicting themes involve conflict management and views of religion and the supernatural. Most Burmese conflicts involve dyadic resolutions characterized by compromise. Most Euro-Canadian and Yoruba conflicts, however, are tryadic (involving adjudication) and Euro-Canadian conflicts are much more frequently resolved with violence than are Burmese and Yoruba conflicts. Finally, the overt mention of religion occurs only in the Yoruba tales. The societies in these tales are polytheistic and religion assumes a position of central importance. There is no overt mention of religion in the Burmese and

Euro-Canadian tales, and, moreover, in one Burmese tale the supernatural provides a subject for jesting. In contrast, the Yoruba tales do not scoff at the supernatural.

This method of analysis thus reveals similarities and differences in the cultural and structural content of folktales and therefore it is an effective tool in eliciting the messages and the means of their transmission in folktales. In addition, other important aspects of the methodology which became obvious in the course of this study include the following: the method reveals that conclusions drawn about the European folktale do not necessarily apply to folktales from other cultures; and the method itself cannot explain the presence or absence of various features in the folktale.

Because this method of reading relies in part on definitions developed by scholars of the European folktale, it is possible to compare the observations of those folklorists with the findings of the current study. This method of reading confirms that many of the observations of Max Lüthi and Vladimir Propp also apply to these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba folktales. Like the European folktale, the tales used in this study tend to lack descriptive detail and are peopled with flat characters lacking precise settings. Moreover, these folktales portray heinous crimes; express religious ideas indirectly; use omniscient narrators; display a structure that is episodic, single-stranded, and heavily redundant; make extensive use of dramatic irony; and tend not to use formal metaphors.

On the other hand, there are numerous instances in which the findings of this study are inconsistent with the conclusions drawn by Lüthi and Propp.

For instance, Lüthi believes that the hero of the folktale is neither intelligent nor virtuous, but the heroes of these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales were found to be both virtuous and intelligent. Lüthi and Propp place very little emphasis on motivations, stating that heroes neither set their own goals nor attain them through their own efforts or accomplishments. Yet, contrary to those claims, the heroes of the folktales in this study were found to be self-motivated and autodynamic. As well, in this study the family assumes more importance to the hero than is the case in the works examined by Lüthi and Propp. These results thus emphasize that generalizations about the European folktale do not necessarily apply to folktales from other cultures. This method of analysis thus serves to emphasize the importance of assessing tales individually.

At this point it is worth stressing that although this method of reading successfully identifies features, the method itself cannot account for the presence or absence of those features. In every case, the characteristics of the tales may originate in the source culture, or may be imposed by the collector or the translator.

There are in each culture's tales elements which appear to reflect the source Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba cultures. For instance, the values projected in the tales seem to reflect actual cultural ideals. That the fictitious Burmese societies live in harmony with the environment and are less man-centred than the fictitious Euro-Canadian and Yoruba societies may find its roots in the actual cultural practices of the Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba peoples. Similarly, the Burmese tales tend to emphasize negotiation and compromise. This is also a feature of the Burmese culture. In addition, many other elements (such as characters, occupations, crops, monetary systems) also reflect the source cultures.

On the other hand, it is also true that these tales exhibit great flexibility with respect to cultural content. Elicited elements do not necessarily occur in every tale and sometimes the tales contain conflicting details. In every group, for instance, some tales use violence to resolve conflict and some tales do not. Moreover, a very small number of the identified elements contradict actual cultural practices. For instance, in the Burmese tales no character engages in agriculture; nor does any character observe religious customs. In actual fact, however, most Burmese are farmers and Buddhism is absolutely central to Burmese social life. In the Yoruba tales the appearance of the nuclear family does not reflect the long-established Yoruba tradition of extended families. As well, none of the portrayed political institutions altogether match historical or existing structures in the Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba cultures. A final point is that the greater tendency of Euro-Canadian tales to resolve conflict with violence does not necessarily mean that Euro-Canadian society was traditionally or is currently more violent than Burmese or Yoruba society. Thus, although the tales are to some extent grounded in reality, inconsistencies with reality do exist.

In a similar way, it cannot necessarily be assumed that the tales' structural content accurately reflects the conceptual systems in the source cultures. Firstly, the tales exhibit variation in structure as well as in content. Hence not all tales contain the same amount of descriptive detail or types of structures (such as proverbs) or kinds of redundancy. Secondly, it is impossible to positively ascribe variations in tale structure to the applicable source cultures because these tales have been translated into English. Although metaphorical concepts and organizational principles might well originate in the source cultures, it is equally plausible that they have been imposed in the process of translation. Similarly, differences in the amount of descriptive detail can be attributed to at least three sources: the relative loquacity of members of the source culture, the writing style of the collector, the interference of the translator. Thus, because the method itself is not designed to pinpoint the source of identified features, some familiarity with the source cultures and a reliance on authoritative versions of the tales would enhance the analysis and permit generalizations that extend beyond the actual text.

To conclude, the method of reading developed in this dissertation successfully elicits the cultural and structural content of these folktales told in Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland. It therefore reveals the messages and the means of their transmission. With this method of reading it is therefore possible to identify similarities and differences in the cultural and language elements of folktales and to assess the potential these tales have for developing and enhancing English-language skills and cross-cultural understanding.

In closing, this study has several implications for pedagogy. The first of these is the general observation that any analysis such as the one developed in this study is more valuable as an identifying tool than as an interpretive resource. Thus, such methods successfully identify elements, but they do not predict how students will interpret the material. This the educator must discover through classroom activities and interaction with students. Moreover, teachers themselves bring to folktales their own views, values, and experiences. This leads to a second observation concerning the use of this methodology as a selection device. Teachers may well select or eliminate folktales based on their observations of cultural and structural content using this method of analysis. However, the method of analysis itself does not carry specific recommendations for the inclusion or exclusion of folktales and therefore any such decisions must be made independently by the teacher.

Thirdly, the tales themselves are not necessarily reliable sources of ethnographic information. As a consequence, the educator must provide supplementary sources of information on the specific cultures. Such resources could include filmstrips, pictures, anthropological treatises, authoritative textbooks, members of the source culture.

Fourthly, the results of the detailed analysis of these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales support the recommendation that these tales be used as instructional aids in enhancing language skills and cross-cultural understanding amongst ESL students. The Fry readability scores suggest that these tales do not contain excessively difficult language. Moreover, because these tales have been translated into English, they necessarily provide students with written samples of that language and they are a rich source of figurative language. The tales achieve a high degree of readability and exemplify how coherence is achieved through clarity and redundancy. The complex interplay of dialogue, narrative summary, and action provides ample evidence to the ESL student of how clues to tale interpretation can be elicited from the text.

In addition to their application in the teaching of language skills, these Burmese, Euro-Canadian, and Yoruba tales can also contribute to cross-cultural understanding. This is not because these tales overtly advocate cultural tolerance: no tale raises the issue of multi-culturalism. Rather, when supplemented with ethnographic information, these tales provide some penetrating and reliable insights into the three source cultures. These tales underline inconsistencies within each culture, reveal differences between the three cultures, and unveil universal cultural concepts. It is the recognition of the complexity of culture, the acknowledgement of cultural differences, and the understanding that cultural constants exist, that constitute a basis for cross-cultural understanding amongst students from diverse cultures. Thus, these tales told in Burma, Canada, and Yorubaland can instill in students an appreciation for different cultures, and hence they can assist in building the foundation requisite to increased tolerance and understanding amongst different peoples. This quality justifies their inclusion in the ESL curriculum.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

"The crow and the wren." In *Burmese folk-tales*, by Maung Htin Aung, 42-46. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

"The drunkard and the opium eater." In *Burmese folk-tales*, by Maung Htin Aung, 173-176. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

"Fourteen hundred cowries." In *Fourteen hundred cowries: traditional stories of the Yoruba*, collected by Abayomi Fuja, 1-6. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

"Ijapa and the hot water test." In *Olode the hunter and other tales from Nigeria*, by Harold Courlander with Ezekiel A. Eshugbayi, 90-95. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, c1968.

"Little Briar-rose." In *The complete Grimm's fairy tales*, by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, 237-241. With an introduction by Padraic Colum and folkloristic commentary by Joseph Campbell. London: Pantheon Books, c1944; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

"The louse and the flea." In *The complete Grimm's fairy tales*, by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, 158-160. With an introduction by Padraic Colum and folkloristic commentary by Joseph Campbell. London: Pantheon Books, c1944; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

"Oni and the great bird." In *Fourteen hundred cowries: traditional stories of the Yoruba*, collected by Abayomi Fuja, 24-30. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

"The peasant's wise daughter." In *The complete Grimm's fairy tales*, by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, 437-440. With an introduction by Padraic Colum and folkloristic commentary by Joseph Campbell. London: Pantheon Books, c1944; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

"The rabbit has a cold." In *Burmese folk-tales*, by Maung Htin Aung, 10-11. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

"The seven mendicants." In *Burmese law tales: the legal element in Burmese folk-lore*, by Maung Htin Aung, 100-102. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

"The sole." In *The complete Grimm's fairy tales*, by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, 709. With an introduction by Padraic Colum and folkloristic commentary by Joseph Campbell. London: Pantheon Books, c1944; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

"Taking a sacrifice to heaven." In *Fourteen hundred cowries: traditional stories of the Yoruba,* collected by Abayomi Fuja, 34-36. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

"Why the vulture is bald." In *Burmese folk-tales,* by Maung Htin Aung, 54-55. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

"The wolf and the fox." In *The complete Grimm's fairy tales,* by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, 351-353. With an introduction by Padraic Colum and folkloristic commentary by Joseph Campbell. London: Pantheon Books, c1944; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Aarne, Antti. *The types of the folktale: a classification and bibliography.* Trans. and enlarged by Stith Thompson. 2nd rev. ed. Helsinki: Helsingin Liikekirjapaino Oy, 1961.

Abrams, M.H. *A glossary of literary terms.* 3rd. ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, c1971.

Adorno, Elvira. "The use of folklore and other materials in the motivation or presentation of a lesson." *Italica,* 28 no.2 (June 1951): 138-141. ED 043247.

Adoum, Jorge Enrique. "The sting in the fairy tale." *The Unesco Courier,* (January 1979): 13-16.

Allen, Virginia French. "Aesop and company: using traditional tales in EFL classes." Paper presented at the Conference of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, Oxford, England, January, 1977. ED 139298.

Aung, Maung Htin. *Burmese folk-tales.* London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

Aung, Maung Htin. *Burmese law tales: the legal element in Burmese folk-lore.* London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Aung, Maung Htin. *Folk elements in Burmese Buddhism.* Rangoon: U Myint Maung, n.d.

Aung, Maung Htin. *Folk tales of Burma.* New Delhi: Sterling, 1976.

Aung, Maung Htin and Helen G. Trager. *A kingdom lost for a drop of honey and other Burmese folktales.* New York: Parents' Magazine Press, c1968.

Azzolina, David S. *Tale type-and motif- indexes: an annotated bibliography.* New York: Garland, 1987.

Bagdanavicius, Vytautas. *Cultural wellsprings of folktales.* Trans. by Jeronimas Zemkalnis. New York: Manyland Books, c1970.

Ball, John. "Style in the folktale." *Folklore*, 65 (December 1954): 170-172.

Barry, Peter. "Is there life after structuralism?" *Critical Quarterly*, 23 no.3 (Autumn 1981): 72-77.

Basgoz, Ilhan. "Digression in oral narrative: a case study of individual remarks by Turkish romance tellers." *Journal of American Folklore*, 99 no.391 (January-March 1986): 5-23.

Basgoz, Ilhan. "The tale singer and his audience." In *Folklore: performance and communication*, ed. by Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein, 143-203. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Basse, Henri. "The pedagogic authenticity of a text." Trans. by Elizabeth White. In *The teaching of listening comprehension*, 20-29. Papers presented at the Goethe Institut Colloquium held in Paris in 1979. London: The British Council, c1981.

Basso, Keith H. "'Wise words' of the Western Apache: metaphor and semantic theory." In *Meaning in anthropology*, ed. by Keith H. Basso and Henry A. Selby, 93-121. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, c1976.

Ben-Amos, Dan and Kenneth S. Goldstein, eds. *Folklore: performance and communication*. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Bettelheim, Bruno. "The psychological role of story." *Bookbird*, 1 (1985): 4-13.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The uses of enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairy tales*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976.

Bolle, Kees W. "Myth and Mythology." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 1976, 12:793-804.

Booth, Wayne C. *The rhetoric of fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Boratav, Pertev Naili. "The tale and the epico-novelistic narrative." Trans. by Mona Fikry. In *Studies in East European folk narrative*, ed. by Linda Dégh, 3-47. n.p.: Indiana University, c1978.

Bosma, Bette. *Fairy tales, fables, legends, and myths: using folk literature in your classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press, c1987.

Bostrom, Robert N., ed. *Competence in communication: a multidisciplinary approach*. Beverly Hills: Sage, c1984.

Bremond, Claude. *Logique du récit*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, c1973.

Brewer's Dictionary of phrase and fable, ed. by Ivor H. Evans. Rev. centenary ed. New York: Harper & Row, c1981.

Bridge, Ethel B. "Hickory Dickory Dock: prelude to choral speaking." *Elementary English*, 49 no.8 (December 1972): 1169-1170.

Brooke-Rose, Christine. "The evil ring: realism and the marvelous." *Poetics Today,* 1 no.4 (Summer 1980): 67-90.

Brown, Gillian. "Understanding spoken language." *TESOL Quarterly,* 12 no.3 (September 1978): 271-283.

Brown, Robert A. "Teaching folklore." *The English Teacher,* 7 no.2 (January 1978): 8-9.

Brumfit, C.J., ed. *Teaching literature overseas: language-based approaches.* ELT Documents 115. Oxford: Pergamon Press in association with The British Council, 1983.

Bunvanich, Chantima. "An analysis of selected studies of Thai folktales as applicable to elementary English reading programs." Ed.D. dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 1976.

"Burma." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., c1985, 2:657-658.

Calfee, Robert C. "The design of comprehensible text." In *The dynamics of language learning: research in reading and English,* ed. by James R. Squire, 80-109. Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication, 1987.

Campbell, Joseph. *The hero with a thousand faces.* 2nd ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968.

The Canadian Encyclopedia, ed. by James H. Marsh. 3 vols. Edmonton: Hurtig, c1985.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne and Lois McIntosh, eds. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, c1979.

Chan, Ivy. "Folktales in the development of multicultural literature for children." *TESL Talk,* 15 no.1&2 (Winter/Spring 1984): 19-28.

Cirlot, J.E. *A dictionary of symbols.* 2nd ed. Trans. by Jack Sage. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

The city of the dagger and other tales from Burma, retold by H.H. Keely and Christine Price. New York: Frederick Warne, c1971.

Clifton, James A., ed. *Introduction to cultural anthropology: essays in the scope and methods of the science of man.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, c1968.

Colby, Benjamin N. "The analysis of culture content and the patterning of narrative concern in texts." *American Anthropologist,* 68 no.2, part 1 (April 1966): 374-388.

Coombs, Clyde H. and George S. Avrunin. *The structure of conflict.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Laurence Erlbaum Associates, 1988.

Cooper, J.C. *An illustrated encyclopaedia of traditional symbols.* London: Thames and Hudson, c1978.

Courlander, Harold with Ezekiel A. Eshugbayi. *Olode the hunter and other tales from Nigeria.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, c1968.

Crook, Patricia R. "Folktales teach appreciation for human predicaments." *The Reading Teacher,* 32 no.4 (January 1979): 449-452.

Culler, Jonathan. "Literary competence." In *Reader-response criticism: from formalism to post-structuralism,* ed. by Jane P. Tompkins, 101-117. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1980.

Culler, Jonathan. *Structuralist poetics: structuralism, linguistics and the study of literature.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

Dan, Ilana. "The innocent persecuted heroine: an attempt at a model for the surface level of the narrative structure of the female fairy tale." In *Patterns in oral literature,* ed. by Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal, 13-30. The Hague: Mouton, c1977.

Davila Velazquez, Sonia. "A study in the use of linguistic structures in folklore for teaching Spanish-reading comprehension skills to fourth-grade Puerto Rican children." Ed.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1982.

Dégh, Linda, ed. *Studies in East European folk narrative.* n.p.: Indiana University, c1978.

Dirven, R. "Basic requirements for integrated listening comprehension materials." In *The teaching of listening comprehension,* 47-60. Papers presented at the Goethe Institut Colloquium held in Paris in 1979. London: The British Council, c1981.

Dolgin, Janet L., David S. Kemnitzer and David M. Schneider, eds. *Symbolic anthropology: a reader in the study of symbols and meanings.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Donlan, Dan. "The negative image of women in children's literature." In *Sexism and youth,* comp. by Diane Gersoni, 217-227. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1974.

Doughty, P.S. *Linguistics and the teaching of literature.* Programme in linguistics and English Teaching, no. 5. London: Longmans, 1968.

Drory, Rina. "Ali Baba and the forty thieves: an attempt at a model for the narrative structure of the reward-and-punishment fairy tale." In *Patterns in oral literature,* ed. by Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal, 31-48. The Hague: Mouton, c1977.

Dundes, Alan. *Analytic essays in folklore.* The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Dundes, Alan. "Folklore as a mirror of culture." *Elementary English* (April 1969): 471-482.

Dundes, Alan. "From etic to emic units in the structural study of folktales." *Journal of American Folklore,* 75 (1962): 95-105.

Dundes, Alan., ed. *The study of folklore*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, c1965.

Eades, J.S. *The Yoruba today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Egan, Owen. "In defense of traditional language: folktales and reading texts." *The Reading Teacher*, 37 no.3 (December 1983): 228-233.

Ellis, John M. *One fairy story too many: The Brothers Grimm and their tales*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Fairman, Anthony. "Using traditional stories." *English Language Teaching Journal*, 35 no.2 (January 1981): 134-136.

Ferguson, John. "Yoruba religion." In *Aspects of African religion*, by Ruth Finnegan and John Ferguson. Man's religious quest, no. 25. Manchester: The Open University Press, 1977.

Ferguson, John et al. *The Yorubas of Nigeria*. Edinburgh: The Open University Press, 1970.

Fischer, John L. "Folktales and childhood experience." In *Handbook of cross-cultural human development*, ed. by Ruth H. Munroe, Robert L. Munroe, Beatrice B. Whiting, 739-753. New York: Garland STPM Press, c1981.

Fish, Harold. "Graded activities and authentic materials for listening comprehension." In *The teaching of listening comprehension*, 107-115. Papers presented at the Goethe Institut Colloquium held in Paris in 1979. London: The British Council, c1981.

Fish, Stanley. "Literature in the reader: affective stylistics." In *Reader-response criticism: from formalism to post-structuralism*, ed. by Jane P. Tompkins, 70-100. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1980.

Fitzroy, Richard Somerset, Fourth Baron Raglan. "The hero of tradition." In *The study of folklore*, ed. by Alan Dundes, 142-157. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, c1965.

Foley, John Miles. *Oral-formulaic theory and research: an introduction and annotated bibliography*. New York: Garland, 1985.

Foley, John Miles, ed. *Oral tradition in literature: interpretation in context*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986.

Foley, John Miles, ed. *Oral traditional literature: a festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1981.

"Folktale." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 1976, IV:212.

Fourteen hundred cowries: traditional stories of the Yoruba, collected by Abayomi Fuja. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Fower, Robert M. "Who is 'the reader' in reader response criticism?" *Semeia*, 31 (1985): 5-21.

Fowke, Edith. *Folklore of Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, c1976.

Fowke, Edith. *Tales told in Canada*. Toronto: Doubleday, 1986.

Fowke, Edith and Carole Henderson Carpenter, comps. *A bibliography of Canadian folklore in English*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, c1981.

Fowke, Edith and Carole H. Carpenter, eds. *Explorations in Canadian folklore*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, c1985.

Fraser, Russell. "Claude Lévi-Strauss and some others." *The Southern Review*, 19 (Autumn 1983): 817-832.

Freilich, Morris. "Lévi-Strauss' myth of method." In *Patterns in oral literature*, ed. by Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal, 223-249. The Hague: Mouton, c1977.

Fry, Edward. "Fry's readability graph: clarifications, validity, and extension to level 17." *Journal of Reading*, 21 no.3 (December 1977): 242-252.

Funk and Wagnalls Standard dictionary of folklore, mythology and legend, ed. by Maria Leach. San Francisco: Harper & Row, c1972.

Gardner, Howard. "Piaget and Lévi-Strauss: the quest for mind." *Social Research*, 37 no.3 (Autumn 1970): 348-365.

Georges, Robert A. "Do narrators really digress? A reconsideration of 'audience asides' in narrating." *Western Folklore*, 40 no.3 (July 1981): 245-252.

Georges, Robert A. "Toward a resolution of the text/context controversy." *Western Folklore*, 39 no.1 (January 1980): 34-40.

Gersoni, Diane, comp. *Sexism and youth*. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1974.

Goddard, David. "Lévi-Strauss and the anthropologists." *Social Research*, 37 no.3 (Autumn 1970): 366-378.

Gorky, Maxim. *On literature: selected articles*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.

Green, A.E. and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds. *Language, culture and tradition*. Papers on Language and Folklore presented at the Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association, April 1978. n.p.: University of Sheffield, c1981.

Gregory, Evelyn. "A story . . . A story. . . linking English, English second language and remedial reading lessons through folk tales." *English Education*, 18 no.2 (Summer 1984): 40-49.

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. *The complete Grimm's fairy tales*. With an introduction by Padraic Colum and folkloristic commentary by Joseph

Campbell. London: Pantheon Books, c1944; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

Hardy, Barbara. *Tellers and listeners: the narrative imagination*. London: The Athlone Press, 1975.

Harris, Theodore L. and Richard E. Hodges, eds. *A dictionary of reading and related terms*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, c1981.

Hawkes, Terence. *Structuralism and semiotics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, c1977.

Henderson-Nicol, Ann. "Vladimir Propp and the structural analysis of folktales: an application of the *Morphology of the folktale* to fairy-tales from Perrault, The Brothers Grimm and French and German folklore." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 1981.

Herschenhorn, Suzanne. "Teaching listening comprehension using live language." In *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, ed. by Marianne Celce-Murcia and Lois McIntosh, 65-73. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, c1979.

Hickman, Warren L. *More means less: conflict and its resolution, a concept study*. New York: Macmillan, c1975.

Hocker, Joyce L. and William W. Wilmot. *Interpersonal conflict*. 2nd ed. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, c1985.

Holman, C. Hugh and William Harmon. *A handbook to literature*. 5th ed. New York: Macmillan, c1986.

Huckle, John J. "Without man: some aspects of the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss." *Thought*, 56 no.223 (December 1981): 387-401.

Hughes, Kenneth James. *Signs of literature: language, ideology, and the literary text*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1986.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The act of reading: a theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, c1978.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The implied reader: patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, c1974.

Iser, Wolfgang. "The reading process: a phenomenological approach." In *Reader-response criticism: from formalism to post-structuralism*, ed. by Jane P. Tompkins, 50-69. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1980.

Jason, Heda. "A model for narrative structure in oral literature." In *Patterns in oral literature*, ed. by Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal, 99-139. The Hague: Mouton, c1977.

Jason, Heda and Dimitri Segal, eds. *Patterns in oral literature*. The Hague: Mouton, c1977.

Jobe, Ron. "Literature, language and Grimm: working together for young children." *Early Childhood Education*, 13 no.1 (Spring 1980): 12-18.

Johnson, Patricia. "Effects on reading comprehension of language complexity and cultural background of a text." *TESOL Quarterly*, 15 no.2 (June 1981): 169-181.

Jones, Steven. "Slouching towards ethnography: the text/context controversy reconsidered. *Western Folklore*, 38 no.1 (January 1979): 42-55.

Juska, Jane. "Levitation, jokes, and spin the bottle: contemporary folklore in the classroom--a teacher's view." *English Journal*, 74 no.2 (February 1985): 37-38.

K. *Burmese culture: general and particular*. Rangoon: Daw Ohn Yyi, 1981.

Kirkpatrick, Margaret Blake. "Teaching motifs through fables, myths, fairy stories and other folk tales." *Elementary English*, 48 no.6 (October 1971): 672-674.

Kloepfer, Rolf. "Dynamic structures in narrative literature: 'the Dialogic Principle'." *Poetics Today*, 1 no.4 (Summer 1980): 115-134.

Koch, Klaus-Friedrich. "Conflict." *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. by David E. Hunter and Phillip Whitten, 88-89. New York: Harper and Row, c1976.

Kosová, Mária. "The category of the narrator in the structure of folklore genres." *Fabula*, 22 no.3/4 (1981): 302-306.

Kropotkin, Pyotr Nikolayevich et al. "Asia." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., c1985, 14:157-294.

Kurian, George Thomas. "Burma." *Encyclopedia of The Third World*, 3rd ed., c1987, I:294-313.

Kurian, George Thomas. "Nigeria." *Encyclopedia of The Third World*, 3rd ed., c1987, II:1471-1491.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Langfeldt, Dr. J. "The educational and moral values of folk and fairy tales." In *Suitable for children? Controversies in children's literature*, ed. by Nicholas Tucker, 56-63. London: Sussex University Press, 1976.

Lanham, Richard A. *A handlist of rhetorical terms: a guide for students of English literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

La Pin, Deirdre. "Narrative as precedent in Yoruba oral tradition." In *Oral traditional literature: a festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*, ed. by John Miles Foley, 345-374. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1981.

Lauritzen, Carol. "Oral literature and the teaching of reading." *The Reading Teacher*, 33 no.7 (April 1980): 787-790.

Lawless, Elaine J. "Oral 'character' and 'literary art': a call for a new reciprocity between oral literature and folklore." *Western Folklore*, 44 (April 1985): 77-96.

Leach, Edmund, ed. *The structural study of myth and totemism.* London: Tavistock Publications, 1968.

Leisher, Johanna. "In support of fairy tales for language instruction." *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 17 no.2 (Fall 1984): 352-354.

Lessa, William A. "Discoverer-of-the-Sun: mythology as a reflection of culture." *Journal of American Folklore*, 79 no.311 (1966): 3-51.

Levin, Isidor. "Vladimir Propp: an evaluation on his seventieth birthday." *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 4 no.1 (June 1967): 32-49.

"Lévi-Strauss, Claude." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 1985, 7:308.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The raw and the cooked: introduction to a science of mythology.* Trans. by John and Doreen Weightman. New York: Harper & Row, c1969.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The story of Asdiwal." Trans. by Nicholas Mann. In *The structural study of myth and totemism*, ed. by Edmund Leach, 1-47. London: Tavistock Publications, 1968.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural anthropology.* Trans. by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, c1963.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The structural study of myth." *Journal of American Folklore*, 68 (1955): 428-444.

Lieberman, Marcia R. "'Some day my prince will come': female acculturation through the fairy tale." In *Sexism and youth*, comp. by Diane Gersoni, 228-243. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1974.

Lintur, P.V. "A folk narrator's method of characterization: the Transcarpathian storyteller Andrij Kalyn." Trans. by Nicholas Krawchuk. In *Studies in East European folk narrative*, ed. by Linda Dégh, 399-447. n.p.: Indiana University, c1978.

Loewenthal, Herbert. "Folktales as a focus for teaching inter-related language arts skills." *Elementary English*, 49 no.3 (March 1972): 428.

Long, Elizabeth. "Women, reading and cultural authority: some implications of the audience perspective in cultural studies." *American Quarterly*, 38 no.4 (Fall 1986): 591-612.

Lord, Albert B. "The merging of two worlds: oral and written poetry as carriers of ancient values." In *Oral tradition in literature: interpretation in* *context*, ed. by John Miles Foley, 19-64. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986.

Lüthi, Max. *The European folktale: form and nature.* Trans. by John D. Niles. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, c1982.

Lüthi, Max. *The fairytale as art form and portrait of man.* Trans. by Jon Erickson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c1984.

Lüthi, Max. *Once upon a time: on the nature of fairy tales.* Trans. by Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976.

Macdonald, Margaret R. "An analysis of children's folktale collections, with an accompanying motif-index of juvenile folktale collections." 2 vols. Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1979.

Macdonald, Margaret R. *The storyteller's sourcebook: a subject, title and motif index to folklore collections for children.* Detroit: Neal-Schuman, c1982.

Mahoney, Nora Belle. "Analyses of selected studies in folklore as applicable to junior high school English programs." Ed.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1972.

Manzo, Anthony V. "Using proverbs to teach reading and thinking." *Query*, 13 no.3 (Fall 1983): 6-12.

Markman, Roberta Hoffman. "The fairy tale: an introduction to literature and the creative process." *College English*, 45 no.1 (January 1983): 31-45.

McArthur, James F. and John C. Carr. "'Que vous avez de grandes oreilles': instant foreign language through fairy tales." *The French Review*, 48 no.6 (May 1975): 1005-1008.

McGroarty, Mary and José L. Galvan. "Culture as an issue in second language teaching." In *Beyond basics: issues and research in TESOL*, ed. by Marianne Celce-Murcia, 81-95. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985.

Morain, Genelle. "Folklore in the foreign language class." *Forum*, 9 no.3 (May 1977): 19–23.

Morain, Genelle Grant. "Some implications of French folk literature for the secondary language curriculum." Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1968.

Moss, Joy. "The fable and critical thinking." *Language Arts*, 57 no.1 (January 1980): 21-29.

Munsegvith, Sunantha. "A descriptive study in the use of folktales as a supplement to a developmental reading program for Non-Thai-speaking children in Thailand's primary grades." Ed.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1982.

Nicholson, Norman L. et al. "Canada." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., c1985, 15:482-551.

Nollendorfs, Cora Lee. "Fairy tales for language instruction: poisoned apple or gold from straw?" *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 16 no.2 (Fall 1983): 290-294.

"Number." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 1976, IX:957.

Obergfell, Sandra C. "Fairy tales as a cultural context in the French classroom." *The French Review*, 56 no.3 (February 1983): 439-446.

Olrik, Axel. "Epic laws of folk narrative." In *The study of folklore*, ed. by Alan Dundes, 129-141. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, c1965.

Omaggio, Alice C. *Teaching language in context: proficiency-oriented instruction*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, c1986.

Pavel, Thomas G. "Narrative domains." *Poetics Today*, 1 no.4 (Summer 1980): 105-114.

Paz, Octavio. *Claude Lévi-Strauss: an introduction*. Trans. by J.S. Bernstein and Maxine Bernstein. New York: Dell, c1970.

Petersen, Kirsten Holst and Anna Rutherford, eds. *Cowries and kobos: the West African oral tale and short story*. Aarhus, Denmark: The Dolphin, 1981.

Polanyi, Livia. "What stories can tell us about their teller's world." *Poetics Today*, 2 no.2 (Winter 1981): 97-112.

Porter, Don and John Roberts. "Authentic listening activities." *ELT Journal*, 36 no.1 (October 1981): 37-47.

Prince, Gerald. *Narratology: the form and functioning of narrative*. Berlin: Mouton, 1982.

Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the folktale*. 2nd ed. Trans. by Louis A. Wagner. Austin: University of Texas Press, c1968.

Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, 1982.

Radford, E. and M.A. Radford. *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions*. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1940.

Ramsaran, Susan. "Stress, rhythm and intonation in the study of English literature." In *Teaching literature overseas: language-based approaches*, ed. by C.J. Brumfit, 85-101. ELT Documents 115. Oxford: Pergamon Press in association with The British Council, 1983.

Richards, Jack C. "Listening comprehension: approach, design, procedure." *TESOL Quarterly*, 17 no.2 (June 1983): 219-240.

Rivest, Philip. "Using myths as models for writing." *Canadian Quill*, 13 no.2 (February 1984): 13.

Robertson, Ian. "French Structuralism." *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. by David E. Hunter and Phillip Whitten, 180. New York: Harper and Row, c1976.

Robey, David, ed. *Structuralism: an introduction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

Rodger, Alex. "Language for literature." In *Teaching literature overseas: language-based approaches*, ed. by C.J. Brumfit, 37-65. ELT Documents 115. Oxford: Pergamon Press in association with The British Council, 1983.

Roselle, Daniel. "A French folktale for elementary school children studying about the language and cultural heritage of French Canadians." *Social Education*, 35 no.6 (October 1971): 616-617.

Ross, Elinor P. "Comparison of folk tale variants." *Language Arts*, 56 no.4 (April 1979): 422-426.

Ruthrof, Horst. *The reader's construction of narrative*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

Sadker, Myra Pollack and David Miller Sadker. *Now upon a time: a contemporary view of children's literature*. New York: Harper & Row, c1977.

Saltman, Judith. *The Riverside anthology of children's literature*. 6th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, c1985.

Savignon, Sandra J. "The meaning of communicative competence in relation to the TOEFL program." In *Toward communicative competence testing: proceedings of the second TOEFL invitational conference*, ed. by Charles W. Stansfield, 17-30. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Services, c1986.

Schallert, Diane. "Thought and language, content and structure in language communication." In *The dynamics of language learning: research in reading and English*, ed. by James R. Squire, 65-79. Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication, 1987.

Scholes, Robert. *Structuralism in literature: an introduction*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

Scholes, Robert. *Textual power: literary theory and the teaching of English*. New Haven: Yale University Press, c1985.

Scholes, Robert. "Toward a semiotics of literature." *Critical Inquiry*, 4 no.1 (Autumn 1977): 105-120.

Scholes, Robert and Robert Kellogg. *The nature of narrative*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Schwartz, Henry A. "Structuralism." *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. by David E. Hunter and Phillip Whitten, 373-374. New York: Harper and Row, c1976.

Scott, A.F. *Current literary terms: a concise dictionary of their origin and use*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965.

Scott, Sir J. George. *Burma and beyond.* Mayfair: Grayson & Grayson, 1932.

Seelye, H. Ned. *Teaching culture: strategies for intercultural communication.* Lincolnwood, Ill.: National Textbook, c1984.

Shaw, Harry. *Dictionary of literary terms.* New York: McGraw-Hill, c1972.

Simons, Elizabeth Radin. "Levitation, jokes, and spin the bottle: contemporary folklore in the classroom--a folklorist's view." *English Journal,* 74 no.2 (February 1985): 32-36.

Simonsen, Michèle. *Le conte populaire.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984.

Sims, C. Margot. "The effect of folklore on the reading comprehension and attitudes of the Alaskan adolescent native." Ph.D. disseration, Hofstra University, 1980.

Smith, Jonathan Zittell. "Myth and Mythology." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., c1985, 24:710-727.

Spearrit, Donald. *Listening comprehension: a factorial analysis.* Melbourne: A.C.E.R., 1962.

Spiro, Melford E. *Kinship and marriage in Burma: a cultural and psychodynamic analysis.* Berkeley: University of California Press, c1977.

Squire, James R., ed. *The dynamics of language learning: research in reading and English.* Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication, 1987.

Stahl, Sandra K.D. "Style in oral and written narratives. *Southern Folklore Quarterly,* 43 no.1/2 (1979): 39-62.

Stanley, John A. "Teaching listening comprehension: an interim report on a project to use uncontrolled language data as a source material for training foreign students in listening comprehension." *TESOL Quarterly,* 12 no.3 (September 1978): 285-295.

Stansfield, Charles W., ed. *Toward communicative competence testing: proceedings of the second TOEFL invitational conference.* Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Services, c1986.

"Structuralism." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., 1985, 11:326.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin. "Redundancy and the 'readable' text." *Poetics Today,* 1 no.3 (Spring 1980): 119-142.

Suleiman, Susan R. and Inge Crosman. *The reader in the text: essays on audience and interpretation.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, c1980.

Taylor, Archer. "The biographical pattern in traditional narrative." *Journal of the Folklore Institute,* 1 no.1/2 (1964): 114-129.

The teaching of listening comprehension. Papers presented at the Goethe Institut Colloquium held in Paris in 1979. London: The British Council, c1981.

Thomas, Howard. "Survey review: recent materials for developing listening skills." *ELT Journal,* 36 no.3 (April 1982): 192-199.

Thompson, Stith. "Folk Literature." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., 1976, 7:454-461.

Thompson, Stith. *The folktale.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, c1946.

Thompson, Stith. "Folktale." *Funk and Wagnalls Standard dictionary of folklore, mythology and legend,* ed. by Maria Leach, 409. San Francisco: Harper & Row, c1972.

Thompson, Stith. *Motif-index of folk-literature: a classification of narrative elements in folktales, ballads, myths, fables, medieval romances, exempla, fabliaux, jest-books, and local legends.* Rev. ed. 6 vols. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955-1958.

To tell a story: narrative theory and practice. Papers read at a Clark Library Seminar February 4, 1972. Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1973.

Toelken, Barre. "Figurative language and cultural contexts in the traditional ballads." *Western Folklore,* 45 no.2 (April 1986): 128-139.

Toliver, Harold. *Animate illusions: explorations of narrative structure.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, c1974.

Tompkins, Jane, ed. *Reader-response criticism: from formalism to post-structuralism.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1980.

Toothaker, Roy Eugene. "Rhetorical devices in literature for children." Ed.D. dissertation, University of Arkansas, 1970.

Trimmer, Mrs. "From *The Guardian of Education* ". In *Suitable for children? Controversies in children's literature,* ed. by Nicholas Tucker, 37-41. London: Sussex University Press, 1976.

Tucker, Nicholas. *The child and the book: a psychological and literary exploration.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Tucker, Nicholas, ed. *Suitable for children? Controversies in children's literature.* London: Sussex University Press, 1976.

Udo, Reuben Kenrick. "Nigeria." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., 1976, 13:85-96.

Ur, Penny. *Teaching listening comprehension.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Van der Geest, Ton. *Some aspects of communicative competence and their implications for language use.* Amsterdam: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 1975.

Vandergrift, Kay E. *Child and story: the literary connection.* New York: Neal-Schuman, c1980.

Victor-Roodd, Juliette. "Goldilocks and the three verbs." *Die Unterrichtspraxis,* 15 no.2 (Fall 1982): 286-288.

de Vries, Ad. *Dictionary of symbols and imagery.* Amsterdam: North-Holland, c1974.

Walker, Virginia and Mary E. Lunz. "Symbols, fairy tales, and school-age children." *The Elementary School Journal,* 77 no.2 (November 1976): 94-100.

Wasserman, Susan. "Raising the English language proficiency of Mexican American children in the primary grades." *California English Journal,* 6 no.2 (April 1970): 22-27.

Waugh, Butler. "Structural analysis in literature and folklore." *Western Folklore,* 25 no.3 (July 1966): 153-164.

Weiser, John et al. "Fairy tales in the elementary school curriculum." *Orbit 58,* 12 no.3 (June 1981): 18-21.

Widdowson, J.D.A. "Language, tradition and regional identity: blason populaire and social control." In *Language, culture and tradition,* ed. by A.E. Green and J.D.A. Widdowson, 33-46. Papers on Language and Folklore presented at the Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association, April 1978. n.p.: University of Sheffield, c1981.

Wilgus, D.K. "Response to Toelken." *Western Folklore,* 45 no.2 (April 1986): 139-142.

Wilson, Anne. *Traditional romance and tale: how stories mean.* Ipswich: D.S. Brewer, c1976.

Yearsley, Macleod. *The folklore of the fairy-tale.* London: Watts, 1924.

Yelland, H.L., S.C. Jones and K.S.W. Easton. *A handbook of literary terms.* London: Angus & Robertson, 1983.

Yetman, Wayne Douglas. "A comparison of Yoruba and Ibo cultural ideals as exemplified by a novel and play of Wole Soyinka and the novels of Chinua Achebe." Master of Museology thesis, University of Toronto, 1971.

"Yoruba." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed., 1976, X:829-830.

Zipes, Jack. *Breaking the magic spell: radical theories of folk and fairy tales.* London: Heinemann, 1979.